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AGITATION:
OR,
M E M O I R S

OF
GEORGE WOODFORD

AND
LADY EMMA MELVILL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

DEDICATED (BY PERMISSION)

TO THE HONOURABLE

Mrs. LIONEL DAMER.

*By the Author of The RING, and
The FALSE FRIENDS.*

A NEW EDITION.

V O L. I.

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Jan 21, 1930
(3 vols)

TO THE HONOURABLE
Mrs. LIONEL DAMER.

HONOURED MADAM,

IT is not that I think the following pages merit your attention, but that the sanction of a lady so well known for the brilliancy of her wit, and intellectual accomplishments, will gain them a favourable reception to a public, to whom I am alike unknowing, and unknown. Your condescension, Madam, claims my warmest gratitude;

yet

*yet it would be highly improper in me
to enumerate, according to the usual
mode of dedications, all the amiable qua-
lities you possess. Accept therefore,
Honoured Madam, my most grateful
acknowledgements for the favour done
me.*

*I am,
Honoured Madam,
With the greatest submission,
Your most obedient,
Most humble,
And obliged Servant,
The AUTHORESS.*

AGITATION:
OR,
MEMOIRS
OF
GEORGE WOODFORD

AND
LADY EMMA MELVILL.

ABOUT the middle of April last, as Mr. Woodford was sitting after dinner (his lady being stepped out) he was roused by the cries of his little son. Unused to any thing of the sort, as he was generally reckoned a sweet tempered child, he started from his elbow chair to see what could be the meaning of so sudden an outcry. When

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on opening the parlour door, he beheld his little darling, his coat off, his waistcoat unbuttoned, his hair hanging in disorder, and his face all besmeared with blood.

God defend my child! cried the fond father, what's the matter? how came you in this condition? Taking him upon his knee, called Farley; and you, John, run for your lady. All this time Master Woodford was sobbing and trying to rub the blood off his hands; but Mrs. Farley the housekeeper entering with the towel and water, soon cleaned his face, and with the general joy, found the stream proceeded from his nose, and a slight scratch on his cheek. Mrs. Woodford now entered; and if the reader should chance to be a mother, it

it may save me the trouble of reciting both the pain and pleasure she felt at finding matters no worse, which by the servant's account, she much feared. Things being now a little adjusted, Mr. and Mrs. Woodford desired an explanation from their son, who thus began his artless tale :

Why, papa and mama, as I was walking up the gravel walk I saw Miss Melvill in an adjacent field, I made as much haste as I could to the stile, that I might join her, but she not perceiving me, walked farther from me, she had a book in her hand which she seemed very attentive to, so would not call out to disturb her, but just as I was but a few paces from her, a boy, very gayly

B 2 dressed,

ressed, jumped from behind the hedge, snatched the book out of Emma's hand, and threw it over. She started, and asked what he meant, and how he dared make so free with her; but he only laughed, and told her he had always heard his papa say, that reading was not fit for pretty girls, as it spoilt their eyes.

Well, sir, said I, I believe rather too hastily, what is it to you if the young lady does spoil her eyes? and who are you I wonder who thus take the liberty of throwing away her book?

Bless me, said he, and who are you pray, who shall dare speak to me thus? but to be sure it's owing to your ignorance of my connections,

tions; know then, fir, that I am the only son of Lord Freemore.

Mercy! and are you really the son of a lord? But in answer to your question, fir, know, that though I don't happen to have a lord for my father, he is a good honest country gentleman, who may buy half the lords in England.

Now I know, papa, you will be angry with me here; but indeed, papa, he looked so big I could not help it; but to hasten to conclude, for I want to forget it, he gave me a blow, which I certainly returned. Poor Emma screamed and ran towards home to call for help, but I in the meanwhile, he having repeated his thumps, gave him a blow

in the face, which made him fall backwards, at the same time his nose and mouth gushed out with blood; frightened at this, not minding self, I threw myself by him, and tried to stop the blood with my handkerchief, but he rudely pushed me from him, and bid me begone.

Just then a footman came up, and raising Master Freemore from the ground, enquired what had been the matter. Why, said I to the man, this young gentleman behaved rudely to a young lady whom I know, which I resented; but he gave me the first blow; however, I am sorry I have hurt him, and will forgive him if he will me, and here's my hand; but instead of giving me his, he turned from me, and said I should
hear

hear more from his father. This is indeed the truth, and he cannot deny it.

Mr. and Mrs. Woodford listened attentively to their son during this recital; they knew he was very courageous, therefore could not wonder at his resenting the usage given to Miss Melvill by Master Freemore; they did not like to condemn, though they could not approve of his conduct; but seeing he waited with anxious expectation for their approbation, his father told him he had better go up stairs and lie down, as his passion seemed to have got the better of his reason.

Poor George, with a bow and a sob, did as he was bid, to endeavour

at repose, which just then was foreign to his breast; but as my readers may be impatient for a nearer view of my hero, I will here give them some account of his family and himself.

Mr. Woodford was an elder brother, possessed of an estate of about fifteen hundred a year; he married a lady whose only dower was a pleasing person, an excellent understanding, and sweetness of temper, which made her beloved by all who knew her; they had but the one son, already mentioned, he was at this time about ten years of age, and they proposed sending him to Eaton in the course of a few months. He inherited great part of his mother's virtues, and perhaps his father's

ther's only failing, too much pride; he had a great deal of sense, and paid great attention to his studies, though he would attend to no one in particular. Mrs. Woodford wished him either to be brought up to the church, physic, or law, but both his father and himself were inclined to the army; this the fond mother dreaded, as she had an antipathy both to the soldier and the sailor, she having lost an amiable brother in the first, and having every reason to think Mr. Woodford had lost one in the second, he having gone out a midshipman in an East Indiaman about eight years before, and had never been heard of since, though every possible enquiry had been made; but she determined not to make

herself uneasy, but rely on providence to place him in whatever station he thought fit. They had settled soon after their marriage in Hertfordshire, where they had constantly resided till within the last two years, they then having gone to town for a few months in winter to shew their son that vast metropolis. They had a genteel neighbourhood, but Mr. Melvill's family were their most intimate friends. Mr. Melvill's estate at this time was but small, though he stood a fair chance of being Earl of Beverly, with a very large one if that nobleman died without children, but he scarce suffered himself to think of such a change, the relationship being so very distant; he had one son,
and

and the daughter who has been before mentioned, but they scarce knew their expectations; the former was about fourteen, the latter nine years of age. Master Henry Melvill was already gone to Eaton, where he often wished in his letters to his sister Master Woodford would join him, not that they were fond of each other, their dispositions being very opposite, young Melvill not only being proud, but obstinate and ill tempered to an extreme degree; his sister Emma was totally the reverse from him, her affability and sweetness of temper was given as a pattern to all the young misses of the place, and to read, to work, to dance, or play (in all which she excelled) as Miss Melvill

Melvill did, was as high a compliment as could be paid to any of her young companions; she was idolized by her parents, and indeed by all who knew her, particularly so by Mr. and Mrs. Woodford, who with pleasure saw both their son and Emma were never so happy as when together, though Mrs. Woodford sometimes found that pleasure alloyed when she considered the wide difference between them. Here they shall rest whilst some account is given of Lord Freemore and family.

The abovementioned nobleman had been created a peer about five years, he married a citizen's daughter with an immense fortune, just before Mr. Freemore his father died; she had, rather a pretty face, but an under-

understanding very indifferent; they had two children, the son before mentioned, and a daughter; the former twelve, the latter eleven years old.

When Miss Baker, which was the maiden name of Lady Freemore, first received the addresses of Mr. Freemore, she only thought of the various amusements she should enjoy by becoming the wife of a gentleman who resided at the court end of the town, she had always sighed for a title, but as she had then entered into her eight-and-twentieth year, she feared being difficult.

Mr. Freemore on the other hand having dissipated a large sum of mo-

ney

ney which was left him by an uncle, independant of his father, determined to marry some lady of large fortune to reinstate him in his former levities; Miss Baker happened to fall in his way; he liked her person *assez bien*, her fortune *beaucoup mieux*; and in less than six weeks the marriage was concluded; they lived tolerably happy, the lady just managing to keep within the bounds of decency, the gentleman within the limits of his estate. In town they were seldom together, but in the country they managed to pass the time pretty well, as they kept a great deal of company, and went to all the assemblies far and near.

Master Freemore had a tutor, Miss a French governess; the former was of a proud disposition, though

though not totally devoid of understanding, he was hot, and piqued himself much on being the son of a lord, which will in some measure account for his behaviour to Master Woodford; his sister, by the slow progress she made in her studies, bid fair to have as little wit as her mother. Young as she was, her whole soul was devoted to dress and dissipation, and she thought time moved with leaden feet till the period arrived when she might go to balls, routs, and masquerades with Lady Freemore.

Thus having endeavoured to give a faint sketch of the several characters, who will most probably make a part of these volumes, I shall proceed with my history.

Master

Master Woodford being retired to his apartment, Mr. Woodford said to his lady, What think you, my dear, of George's behaviour?

Why I don't know, I can't say it is at all to be condemned, though I make no doubt but you will hear from Lord Freemore, returned Mrs. Woodford.

I care not a rush about that; but methinks he shews evident marks of his affection for Emma Melvill.

He certainly does, but I'm afraid that will never come to any thing.

Why not, why not, my dear?

Because our son will never be in a situation to support, as a wife, the daughter of the Earl of Beverly.

Pho,

Pho, pho, child, always harping on the old string; why he is not an earl yet.

Very true, my dear, nor are the young people of a fit age to marry yet, therefore we had better drop the subject. Aye, aye, with all my heart, for it is one you and I often dispute on. At this moment a servant entered from Mr. Melvill to know how Master Woodford did; the man adding, that Miss Emma had been crying ever since for fear Master George should be hurt. Mrs. Woodford told the man he had received no great harm, and that as soon as he had had some rest, he should call on Miss Melvill and assure her of his being perfectly well.

very faithfully
Master

Master Freemore on his entrance into the house, enquired for his mama, saying he would go directly and tell her how he had been used; being informed she was in her dressing-room, he proceeded towards it, but in his way met his sister, who giving a terrible shriek to see the condition he was in, ran first to my lady. My lord hearing the bustle, came out and followed Master John into the drawing-room, where he demanded the reason of so sudden an outcry, and his appearance.

John had some good nature, and by this time began to think himself in the wrong, he therefore did not try to extenuate his fault, but related the whole very faithfully, which

which made his father smile, but at the same time told him it was rather too early for him to quarrel about the girls, and advised him to take the first opportunity of being friends with Master Woodford. My lady called it a foolish affair, adding, do child, go and have your face washed, for you absolutely make me sick. Young Freemore did as he was bid, and then begged his tutor to go with him to Mr. Woodford's, that he might be friends with the young gentleman. He did so, and Mr. Melvill's servant was but just gone when Master Freemore entered the parlour, he soon made his business known; when Mr. Woodford sent for his son; who immediately came down, and

and a reconciliation took place between them. The young gentlemen then proceeded to Miss Melvill to obtain her pardon, which being granted, they spent the afternoon in the utmost harmony.

A few weeks after this, Master Woodford was sent to Eaton, where he made great progress in his studies; this made him esteemed by some and envied by others; among the latter class was Master Melvill, who could but ill brook being surpassed by a boy so much younger than himself, yet had he the finesse to make every one believe he was very fond of him; some indeed saw through the deceit, but were not generous enough to warn Master Woodford of him, nor indeed would

it

it have been to any purpose, as he was easily deceived by those who chose to pay their court to him. Among his intimates was a Sir Charles Guildford, whose father had been dead about three years, and left him in the possession of a large estate. He had lost his mother when he was but seven years of age; her loss had been supplied by her sister, a widow with one daughter. This lady took great pains to make her nephew an amiable young man, nor was her care of him ill requited, he was very fond of his aunt and cousin, and strove all in his power, as their income was but small, to make their situation more eligible, as his allowance was ample before his father's death; but
on

on coming to his estate, he insisted on his aunt, Mrs. Harley, accepting an annuity of five hundred pounds, which with their own, enabled them to live very genteelly. From an acquaintance with this young gentleman, my readers will readily suppose Mr. George Woodford would receive no harm; he certainly did not, yet are there failings in the best of us, which should be avoided; Sir Charles had but few, but these few our young hero too closely copied.

Guildford was immoderately fond of dress, which foible he might certainly indulge, as his estate was large, and he not at all inclined to incumber it with debts of honour, neither did he ever run in debt to
any

any man, as it was the tradesman's own fault if his bill was not paid on the delivery of the goods; his second failing, which I hope most of my readers will with me condemn, was a too great love of wine, as there was seldom an evening when at home that he was not intoxicated; at Eaton he was forced to be more circumspect. He was now in his eighteenth year, when he determined to go to the university of Oxford for some short time. Mr. George Woodford was much of the same age, and had a strong desire to accompany Sir Charles, which the latter wished very much. As Mr. George intended spending the Whitsun vacation with his father and mother, he persuaded Sir Charles

Charles to accompany him; this he willingly did, and the next morning Sir Charles Guildford, Mr. Henry Melvill, and Mr. George Woodford, set off for Herts. The meeting between the parents and their children was tender and affectionate; Miss Melvill received the salute of her brother with a true sisterly affection, but when Mr. George did the same, she blushed and turned pale alternately; this he, who had no small share of vanity, perceived, his pride was pleased to see himself thus distinguished, though he had scarce ever thought of Miss Melvill when out of his sight. Not so the gentle Emma; brought up almost together, she gave her innocent heart without being

being aware of the consequences; her temper has been already described, but not her person. She was tall of her age, very genteel, fair complexion, dark eyes, small mouth, and tolerable teeth; in short she was a pleasing figure, though not a regular beauty, but her sweetness of temper and affable behaviour, amply supplied any little *agremens* which might be wanting in her person.

Mr. George Woodford was tall, and, if I may be allowed the expression, a very elegant figure, his complexion was dark, black eyes, and the finest teeth and hand perhaps in the world. I don't doubt but my fair readers will allow this phoenix of a man some vanity, but

am afraid they will have reason to despise him for it in the subsequent sheets.

Mr. and Mrs. Woodford could not fail of being pleased with their son, who was the life of the company wherever he went; all the young ladies were in love with him, about the country, and each strove to please, but his heart was cold as marble, and he chattered with one, romped with a second, danced with a third and sung with a fourth, without once finding his heart in the least danger. Among the ladies who most wished to please, was Miss Freemore; she was now initiated in the beau monde, and a true woman of fashion; she was not over burdened with sense, nor did she attempt

tempt to be witty, she was rather more affected than conceited, and of every one's opinion though ever so opposite; she was fond of nothing till Mr. Woodford arrived; but he saying one day he was a great lover of books, she too immediately grew fond of them; another time he spoke of dancing, which she had hitherto thought too robust for a fine lady, but now was her adoration. George perceiving this, was mischievous enough to play on her foibles, and make her hate and adore, adore and hate the same thing twice in an hour, as she would always say as he did, let it be ever so opposite. Miss Melvill saw this temper of his, with concern, which affected her more when exercised on others, than on Miss

Freemore, as she wished her to be cured of her folly. Often would she thus reason with herself: Is it possible that the once goodnatured Woodford can be so changed! how can he delight in thus teasing our sex? why not try to help their faults, without making them public and exposing them all he can? why has he so immoderate a share of vanity? 'tis true few men can boast of a more pleasing person or a better understanding, but why must that understanding be exercised on us poor weak mortals alone? does this shew his sense? it certainly does not. Besides, Sir Charles does not act so, but yet perhaps in private he despises us more. O man, man! thou art born to deceive; but sure Woodford can't deceive! but whither
does

does my imagination carry me! what is he to me; will he, can he be any thing to me? No, no, Emma, when he has seen a little more of the world, you and all his former youthful companions will be forgotten: thus ended her soliloquy. Mr. Woodford doated on his son, and scarce saw his failings, but his lady though she loved him with the same affection, saw with concern that he had a number of faults. Often when she has come into the room and caught him at the glass, has she given him lectures on his vanity; those lectures were certainly not thrown away at the moment, but they were too soon forgot. Another matter of concern to her was the slight notice he took of Miss Melvill; to be sure when she was present,

sent, he would have made any one believe he adored her, but if any of his acquaintance praised her when she was gone, he never joined with them, and when his opinion was asked, all the answer they received was, she is well enough, but nothing extraordinary. At first Mrs. Woodford thought this might only be a finesse to try if any one loved her more than himself, but this she had soon reason to give up, as he was equally indifferent when she or his father was speaking of her; she saw that Emma liked him, and she likewise saw Mr. and Mrs. Melvill were inclined to encourage it, but she determined to be easy for the present, hoping in a few years he would adopt a new mode of thinking.

When

When Mr. Woodford first saw his son's desire of going to Oxford, he was averse to it, but through the persuasions of Sir Charles and his son, he consented, on which Mr. Melvill determined to send Mr. Henry likewise. This being settled, they stayed another month with their friends, and then prepared for their journey; the day at length arrived, Mrs. Woodford saw it approach with a pain she could not account for; she had much to say, but could scarce articulate a syllable, she pressed him in her arms; adieu, my son, God direct you in the paths of rectitude!

His father was scarce less affected, he took him in his closet, and warned him of the dangers he

might be exposed to; beware of intemperance, said he, of any kind, recollect your fortune is but small, your expectations none; never be laughed out of your religion, nor ashamed to own there is a God; be careful to shun all vice, suit your pleasures to your pocket, never outrun your income, never be in debt; and never bring yourself in a scrape which needs the assistance of a friend to extricate you. Always respect virtue wherever you find it, and never dare to seduce innocence. Be not vain of your person, or think every woman you see in love with you; in point of marriage, never marry a woman merely for her money; and in short, be steady in your principles, true to yourself, king and country, and
never

never embroil yourself in any quarrel whatsoever. Here ended Mr. Woodford, who taking his son's hand, led him to the company; the chaise waited and the gentlemen prepared to take their leave; George advanced to Miss Melvill, adieu, Miss Emma, will you sometimes think of your old acquaintance? Most certainly, sir, returned the trembling girl, and shall always expect to hear of your welfare in my brother's letters. George bowed, saluted her, took an affectionate leave of his parents, and stepped into the chaise with Sir Charles and young Melvill. My readers will perhaps wonder that so affecting a leave should be taken, when our hero was only going to Oxford, but they knew it to be a dangerous

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as well as a proper place, they knew he could be more his own master there, than he possibly could at Eaton. On the departure of her son, Mrs. Woodford determined to banish every uneasy thought from her mind; to what purpose, said she, should I torment myself with imaginary ills? he has a great deal of good sense, if he will but put it to a right use; he has too much vanity, but yet if it is excusable in any one, is it not so in him? but then his behaviour to the amiable Emma disturbs me much, but avaunt reflection!

Miss Melvill when she returned home hastened to her apartment, to give vent to a grief she would fain have persuaded herself arose from

from the departure of her brother alone; but still George Woodford obtruded himself; she took her heart severely to task, for thus suffering itself to think of a man, who she had every reason to believe thought nothing of her. No, has he not behaved to every one alike, why then does he thus ingross my thoughts? She was then summoned to supper, when she found her mind more composed than it had been for some weeks past.

Miss Freemore, who really loved George Woodford better than she had any thing in her life, was for some time *au desespoir*, but at length the various dissipations she was engaged in, made her almost forget him; not so Miss Melvill. He had
now

now been away five months, in which time she had had several letters from her brother, in each of which she received the compliments of Mr. Woodford and Sir Charles Guildford; she could not help thinking it odd that the former never enclosed a line for her, for though she would have thought it indelicate to have received letters from a stranger, she could not think it any harm from one who had been partly brought up with her; thus did she torment herself, and here we will leave her for the present.

Our young hero with his two companions were now settled at Oxford, where they found young Freemore, who had been there about

about a twelvemonth; he introduced them to his fellow students, and each party selected their intimates. Sir Charles and Woodford being much of a disposition, selected their own particular friends, among whom was a Sir James Sedley, he was about one or two and twenty, was rather ordinary in his person, but very good-natured, warm in his pursuit after pleasure, but carefully avoiding any excess of vice; he had known Sir Charles at Eaton, therefore the intimacy was soon renewed; Woodford likewise shared his friendship, and these three were inseparable. Henry Melvill did not at all approve this, as it ill suited his schemes, he wished to ruin George in the opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Melvill, as he feared a union
between

between his sister and him, he could not bear to think she should marry a man with so trifling an estate and no title; he knew his own expectations, and looked on them for certain, although his father had repeatedly assured him he had not the least hope of the earl's dying single.

But if this had not been the case, so implacable was his aversion to young Woodford, he would never have relished the calling him brother, he therefore scarce ever told Mr. George when he intended writing to his sister, but merely sent his compliments out of his own head.

They each pursued their studies with the utmost avidity, and at a twelve-

twelvemonth's end, were greatly improved. The time of the vacation drawing near, Mr. Woodford, Mr. Freemore, and Mr. Melvill made preparations for a visit to Hertfordshire; Sir Charles proposed going directly to town to pay his duty to his aunt, but promised as soon as possible to join his friends in Herts.

They set off and arrived at their respective destinations safe and well; Mr. and Mrs. Woodford were delighted with the improvements they observed in their son, Miss Melvill likewise found new charms in him, and forgot all his failings; he had been about a week at his father's when Sir Charles Guildford joined him. Lord and
Lady

Lady Freemore were at Bath, where their son immediately went.

The Woodfords and Melvills did all in their power to divert their young visitors, but though Mrs. Woodford had the happiness to see a great deal of the fop laid aside in her son, she did not perceive he paid more attention to Miss Melvill; he still appeared cold and insensible to the various accomplishments she so eminently possessed, this hurt her much, as she was certain Emma Melvill would make a most excellent wife: she felt herself decline very fast. She endeavoured to hide it from her husband as much as possible, but it grew too visible to be concealed, and he insisted on her going to town for advice,

advice, but it was too late; she was in a galloping consumption, and beyond the reach of medicine.

When she gave her son her blessing she begged him to make her one promise, that let what would happen, he would never enter into the land or sea service; this he assured her he would not, though he was so much affected, he could scarce articulate a syllable, and a few hours after this excellent lady expired in her husband's arms.

This was a severe stroke for Mr. Woodford and his son; indeed the former could never get over it, though in three months he found himself, as he thought, so much better, that he persuaded his son to
join

join his friends at college; this our hero was at length prevailed on to do. And he took an affectionate leave of his father and set off. About six weeks after his arrival at Oxford, an express came to Mr. Henry Melvill, desiring he would join his father immediately, he being in a very bad state of health, and ordered by his physicians to Lisbon. The young gentleman took an hasty leave of his companions and hurried away.

Mr. Woodford wrote regularly once a week to his son, but now three weeks had passed, and he had not received a line. Alarmed at this, he told Sir Charles, he determined to go to town and see if his father was ill; his friend approved the
the

the motion, and offered to accompany him. They set off the next morning, but were met about half-way by a servant to inform Mr. George Woodford, that his father was dangerously ill, and desired his presence immediately. They redoubled their speed, but it was too late; the old gentleman was speechless; just knew his son, and pressed him in his arms and expired.

Our young hero for some days refused all comfort, nor would he listen to his friend, who strove all in his power to alleviate his sorrow. At length his youth and spirits got the better of his grief, and he began to look into his affairs; he found by the will, that the estate was clear of all incumbrances,
and

and a few debts and legacies excepted, five thousand pounds in cash. He discharged those servants which were useless to him, as he proposed letting the house, not intending to reside there, at least for the present. Sir Charles, in order to dissipate his chagrin, prevailed on him to take a trip to town; George assented, and all things being settled they set off.

Would it were in my power, my good readers, to hide the follies which succeed; but it is not, and I can only beg you to remember, that he is scarce one-and-twenty, left entirely to his own guidance, without any one to controul him. Had Mr. Melvill been in England when Mr. Woodford died, it is more than probable

probable he would have recommended his son to his care, but he being absent, he knew of no one he could confide in; he therefore thought it better, as Mr. George was nearly of age, to leave him to his own care. On their arrival in town they took lodgings in St. James's Street for the winter, which was now pretty far advanced; and launched into all the pleasures of the great world at once.

Sir Charles's figure and rank in life, procured him many friends, and as they were always together, his acquaintance was Mr. Woodford's. Guildford on their coming to town carried his friend to see his aunt Mrs. Harley; they found the lady and her daughter at tea.

Mrs.

Mrs. Harley received her nephew with the sincerest affection, and shewed all imaginable respect and courtesy to Mr. Woodford, as the friend of Sir Charles. Miss Harley was about eighteen; she could boast of no personal charms, but was in the general styled the agreeable brunette. She had a great flow of spirits; too much so indeed for a girl in her station, as they sometimes were apt to carry her beyond the bounds of decorum. She was fond of her cousin, more for the pleasures he procured her than his generous behaviour; she had no settled affection for him, for her heart was too volatile to be easily touched. In spite however of her frigidity she could not see our hero without some emotion; the elegance of his person,

person, with the easy familiarity he accosted them, delighted her. She had never heard any man discourse with so much gaiety and spirit; and in short, she had never seen one she thought so agreeable. George, on the other hand, was pleased with the lively part she bore in the conversation; as to love, it was at this time foreign to his breast, all women were as he thought alike to him; they all seemed to adore him, but he really loved none. Perhaps if he had searched to the bottom of his heart, he might have found himself mistaken; he had when a child looked on Miss Melvill in the light of his sister; he had loved her as such, and could bear to hear no one speak ill of her; when he parted with her to go to
Eaton,

Eaton, he felt a void in his heart he had never experienced before, but a close application to his studies made him almost totally forget her. When he went home he was always glad to see her, and had she been absent, he perhaps would have regretted the loss of her. On his arrival at maturer years, his person took up all his attention, vain of that, he scarce thought of any thing but to make that more perfect. Fond of the ladies in general, more so of those who admired him, he would not take the trouble to fix his heart on one in particular; he would sometimes think of Miss Melvill, but the sight of any other female quickly expelled her idea.

Perhaps

Perhaps, as I am now speaking of this young lady, it may not be amiss to take a trip to Lisbon, and see what they are doing. Mr. Melvill's health was greatly mended, to the great joy of his lady and daughter; that daughter was the admiration of all who saw her. She had several offers from foreign noblemen, as well as English, all of which she rejected. It was in vain she endeavoured to forget Woodford, every man she saw caused her to make some comparison, though perhaps many which she made in his favour, would have been totally the reverse, had she at that time known his character. They talked of going to England in the course of a month, which delighted Emma much, as

she longed to see the conduct of Woodford, now he had lost both his parents, the death of old Mr. Woodford having been announced in the news papers, for young Melvill had wrote to Oxford, but never received any answer, which they all attributed to the right cause, that he had never received it; though Emma would often say to herself, if he had quitted college the letter would have been sent after him, but perhaps he might be at some distant part of the world, and the servants may not know where to direct to him. Perhaps he may be ill; shocking thought! let me banish the horrid Idea. In this manner did this amiable girl torment herself, about an object which

which at this time was very unworthy her attention.

Far differently were his thoughts employed. Thinking himself too confined in a private lodging, he determined to take a house; no sooner said than done, he hired a small but elegant one, in Bruton-street. His furniture and equipage were of the newest fashion, and the whole etiquette of his establishment displayed more taste than prudence. He would have persuaded Sir Charles Guildford and Sir James Sedley to reside with him, the latter being just come to town, but Sir Charles chose to have a house to himself, and Sir James lived with his sister, who was above ten years older than himself; he was

often rallied on this score by young Woodford, neither did Sir Charles let him always escape; but Sir James heeded them not: he was fond of his sister, as she was of him, and he thought while he lived he ought to protect her. I believe I have before said, he was good natured, and likewise fond of pleasure, yet was he not so eager in his pursuit after it as his two friends; rational amusements sometimes engaged his attention, but late hours or drinking he detested. He never made a toil of dressing, though his clothes were plain and elegant, and however partial to the fair sex, he avoided the vicious part of them. His disposition therefore was widely different from Guildford's and Woodford's, yet
were

were they very good friends. Sir James often took the liberty to reprove their follies, but it was to no purpose. Woodford would not listen to advice, but determined to pursue pleasure while he was in a situation to enjoy it.

Sir Charles was at times alarmed for his friend; for though he knew not his estate exactly, he was well convinced it was not equal to his own, yet George's expences were full as large as his, nay, in some shapes they were more so. He always appeared in good humour, and was the first in every new fashion. Soon after his being settled in Bruton-street, Lord and Lady Freemore arrived in town. The third night after their arrival Lady Free-

now

D 3

more

more and her daughter went to the play; the second act was just over, when our hero, with Sir Charles Guildford, entered the opposite box. They seated themselves in the front, and George soon drew the attention of the house.

He saw a number of his acquaintance; bowed to one, kissed his hand to a second, and nodded to a third. Miss Freemore in vain tried to attract his notice; he either did not or would not see her for sometime, till at length she caught his eye, when he immediately kissed his hand to miss, and bowed respectfully to her ladyship. He pointed them out to Sir Charles, who likewise paid his compliments. When the curtain dropped, Woodford
went

went round to Lady Freemore's box. Miss delighted at this, received him with the utmost good humour.

Lord, Mr. Woodford, where have you been? cried she on his entrance, why we thought you dead.

Rather let me say, madam, we were afraid for you; how could you so long hide your charms from the world, and leave us poor miserable wretches in despair?

Dear sir, you are never at a loss for a compliment.

On my honour it is none; no one has so sincerely mourned your absence as myself: witness the

palpitation of my heart this moment.

As he spoke the last words, two ladies entered the box which he had quitted; their appearance denoted them to be people of fashion, but Woodford knew them not. Pray who are they? whispered he to Miss. Why don't you know them? returned she; they are the Countess of Farmley and her daughter, Lady Harriot Nevill. She has a large fortune, and is reckoned very handsome. Do you think her so?

She appears to be very well here, but one can hardly judge at this distance. George was now angry that he had quitted his box, more
so,

so, as he saw Sir Charles enter into immediate conversation with the strangers. He sat very uneasy till the first act of the farce was over; he then rose, wished the Freemore's a good evening, and hastened to the other side of the house. Lady Harriot's eyes were directed towards him on his first entrance, but she immediately turned them down again with a modest diffidence, nor did she once again look at him during the short time they staid. She said but little, and was even more distant to Sir Charles. George, who had never before been obliged to court the attention of any female, felt himself not a little piqued at the behaviour of this, as he thought, fair insensible. The entertainment being over, Sir Charles

offered his hand to Lady Harriot, and led her out. George, out of politeness, was forced to take that of the countess. It was with some little uneasiness he saw the smiles which his friend was honoured with, from Lady Harriot; he thought he liked her better than any lady he then knew, and she was the only woman that ever seemed so indifferent about him. His coach being announced, he stepped in, and Sir Charles followed, who immediately asked how he liked Lady Harriot Nevill?

I think her a very fine woman, returned Woodford; how long has she been in town? She only came yesterday. You knew her before then? Yes, I saw her in the summer

mer at the seat of her uncle, the Duke of Larlingford. She is a very amiable young lady, and very different from most of our present tonish ones. The carriage now stopped at Sir Charles's house in Berkley Square, where there was a large party of gentlemen to sup; a good deal of the company were assembled, which hindered any further discourse. They were a set of *bons vivants*, who passed the best part of the night in a riotous manner, nor did they think of departing till fair Aurora dispelled the shades of night. Our hero was forced to be led to his carriage, and afterwards to bed. When he awoke, which by the by, was not till near three o'clock, he was told that a gentleman had been three times to enquire for him, but had refused

refused to leave his name. He desired a description of him, but could not recollect from the portrait the servant drew, who he could be ; he therefore went to breakfast, with orders to admit him if he called again. He had not been long at his repast, which, however he had no relish for, when the door opened, and Mr. Henry Melvill entered. George received him with open arms, and was really glad to see him; he enquired after his father, mother, and sister.

They are all well, returned Melvill, and will be glad of your company to dinner.

I will certainly wait on them. But prithee, Harry, how have you passed

passed your time since you have been abroad ? Very agreeably ; there is a number of English noblemen at Lisbon, which render it more pleasant to strangers. Here Sir James Sedley, with several other gentlemen entered, and soon after Mr. Mevill took his leave, telling his friend they should dine at four. Our hero was now forced to dress in a hurry, as it was two hours earlier than his general hours of dinner.

Mr. Melvill's family had been in England about a month : they first went to their seat in Hertfordshire, where they were not a little surprised to find Woodford-House lett to another tenant. As soon as a few necessary affairs were settled, they came to town.

Mr.

Mr. Melvill desired his son to find out Woodford as soon as possible ; for both he and Mrs. Melvill saw their Emma was uneasy, though she said nothing. Three days had passed before he saw any one who could inform him of his residence ; but on the fourth, as he was at breakfast at the St. James's coffee-house, he met Sir James Sedley, who gave him Mr. Woodford's address. He immediately went to his house, but was told that he was not yet stirring. Henry returned home to inform his sister that he had at length found him. She was pleased at this intelligence, but not so well pleased at the description of his house and servants, as she feared he would exceed his income. Mr. Melvill finding his son proposed going

going again to Bruton-street, desired he would ask George to dinner.

The reader is already acquainted with what passed in Bruton-street, and that Mr. Woodford was forced to dress in a hurry ; but in spite of his haste, he took a great deal of pains to adorn his person ; not so much to charm Miss Melvill as any other female that might be there, not doubting of finding more company. At half an hour after four he stepped into his carriage, and proceeded to Brook-street. Miss Melvill had been watching at the window from the time she was dressed, and was not a little chagrined to find he did not come exactly at four, as she knew her father was not pleased to wait after that

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that hour. For the first quarter of an hour she laid the fault on their watches, asking her papa if he did not think his watch too fast. Mr. Melvill smiled, saying, why it may be faster than his, my dear, but we must allow some little time for him, as he was but just up at three. Emma was satisfied to find that her papa excused him, yet was sorry he should take so long time adorning a person which wanted so little ornament; yet, thought she, might he not have been hindered by some important visitor? Mr. and Mrs. Melvill could not help smiling at the anxious expectancy she betrayed at the sound of a carriage. At length it arrived, and the all-conquering hero entered the drawing-room, armed at all points to charm.

charm. He paid his compliments to the ladies with his usual grace, and shook hands with the gentlemen, in a most respectful and friendly manner. Mr. Melvill rung for dinner, telling Mr. Woodford he was a good deal after his time. George made his excuses, and adjourned to the dining-parlour; he was the life of the table, and kept up the conversation with the greatest vivacity. The servants being withdrawn, Mr. Melvill, addressing George, said :

You have, I find, sir, disposed of Woodford-House.

I have, sir, lett it for three years, as I shall not want it during that period.

Where

Where do you propose to reside then in Summer? O, mostly in town, sir; unless, indeed, two or three of the hottest months, when I shall probably take a trip to some of the watering-places.

You are very fond of the town then? Yes, my dear sir, indeed I am; it is the garden of the world: is it not, my dear Miss Melvill?

It is indeed, sir, a garden, but I am afraid more for weeds than flowers; as our modern fashionable people seem to pluck the former and leave the latter. George felt himself a little disconcerted at this answer, but soon recovering, he asked Mrs. Melvill how she liked Lisbon. I hardly know, as we merely went
on

on account of Mr. Melvill's health, my attention was fixed on that, not on the town. George, who did not at all relish these sober answers, determined to be silent. Mrs. Melvill soon proposed going to the drawing-room, where in a short time, to the great joy of our hero, company was announced, among which was Lady Freemore and Miss. She soon singled out Mr. Woodford, and played off all her coquettish airs to draw him to herself. This she at length succeeded in; for finding Emma treated him with only a distant politeness, and seemed indifferent both to his person and conversation, he took the first opportunity to change his seat, and attached himself to Miss Freemore for the rest of his visit. About
nine

nine he took his leave, but not without a general invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Melvill to Brook-street during their stay in town. He found himself rather out of spirits after this sober visit, so unlike any he had since in town been accustomed to. He ordered his servants to carry him to Sir Charles Guildford's; but here he was again disappointed, for that gentleman had not been home since dinner. From hence he bid them drive to Ranelagh; but he entered the rotundo with a mind more disturbed than he had experienced for some months. 'Tis true Mr. and Mrs. Melvill had given him a hearty welcome on his first entrance; but the cool indifference of Miss Melvill, joined with the serious manner with

with which her father and mother treated the levities which pleased all others, hurt him much; but Emma's behaviour he thought very unaccountable. He had hitherto received general admiration from the fair-sex; how came it then, that she who had in a manner been brought up with him was so indifferent? but thought he again, this may be the very thing; accustomed to my person, my manners and behaviour from our infancy, she is familiar to them; yet methinks she might make some little difference between me and others. I think *her* very different from the generality of her sex: I see *her* perfections, though she won't see *mine*: yet happy as I am, what perfections have I? At this moment the

car-

carriage stopped; he entered with an easy negligence not common to him, as he always took great pains to attract immediate notice; but at this moment he wanted the attention of none, but this was impossible; like a magnet he drew all eyes upon himself, and those who did not know him, asked who that elegant gentleman was. These whispers, however, were all thrown away, and he would most probably have continued in his reverie, had he not been suddenly raised by a smart blow from a lady's fan on the shoulder: he turned to see who it was, when he beheld Miss Harley and her mother, to whom he immediately paid his compliments, at the same time expressing his surprise at their being alone. The
lively

lively Clara, with great quickness, told him they had not come out alone, for her cousin had brought them in his carriage; but, added she, he has left us to join some others, and now I shall insist on your being our 'squire for the rest of the evening. George bowed, but made no answer. She prattled on for some time, but finding he made no reply, she asked if he was not well. Lord, Mr. Woodford, I never saw you so stupid before. He smiled, and said he had the head-ach. Soon after this as they were passing a box, our hero heard himself called, and on turning round, found Sir Charles Guildford sipping his tea with the Countess of Farmley and her fair daughter. He instantly turned back, for stupid as he appeared, he
was

was not willing to miss making an acquaintance with so fine a woman as Lady Harriot; on his entrance, Sir Charles said, give me leave to present Mr. Woodford, one of my most intimate friends, to your ladyship. She bowed, and received his compliment with a sweet smile, and after the usual ceremony had passed to the countess her mother, made room for him to be seated. They soon entered into a lively and agreeable conversation, which quickly dispersed the *ennui* that had for the first part of the evening usurped the breast of our hero. Lady Harriot and her mama were much pleased with Woodford, and on the gentlemen leading them to their carriage, the countess said she should always be happy to see Mr. Wood-

Woodford with Sir Charles Guildford at her house. Lady Harriot smiled, wished them a good night, or rather morning, and the coach drove off. The two gentlemen then returned to the rotundo to seek Mrs. Harley and her daughter, whom they were sensible they had treated with neglect. Mrs. Harley received the excuses of her nephew with great good humour, telling him she should be very uneasy if he ever confined himself on her account. Miss pouted at first, but some well-timed compliment from Woodford, who had now perfectly recovered his usual gaiety, soon restored her features to their former hilarity. Sir Charles now made a motion to go home, at the same time desiring his friend to take a cor-

ner in his carriage, and send his own home. George readily assented to this, and during their ride the conversation was kept up with great spirit on all sides. The ladies were set down, when Sir Charles carried his friend to Bruton-street, telling him at parting, he would breakfast with him in the morning. We will here leave them to their repose, and hear what Miss Melvill said, or rather thought on the departure of Woodford.

She was happy when the Freemores with the rest of the company took their leave; and as soon as supper was over, retired to her apartment to indulge a train of disagreeable ideas which crowded to her mind. Our hero's behaviour during

during this day's visit, had hurt her excessively. There was an indifference in his behaviour to them all, which seemed very unaccountable from one who had always been considered as a second son by her parents, and a brother by herself. Good heavens ! said she, shall I at length be forced to adopt my brother's opinion of him, that is, a self-sufficient coxcomb ! No, forbid it heaven, that he should merit so despicable a name ! Had not his parents been taken from him at so critical a juncture, his behaviour would have been far different ; but he had no friend to advise him, which has made him too hastily run into the extreme of fashion. He is certainly very handsome, nay, the women don't scruple

ple to let him see they almost think him a god ; witness the foolish partiality shewn him by Miss Freemore : I believe she loves him as much as she is capable of loving any one, but I cannot think he returns that love. Yet, why does he flatter her vanity by attaching himself to her alone ? nay, he left me to entertain her. The last words escaped her tongue before she was aware, and though alone, she could not help blushing : and who are you, Emma, resumed she, that should presume to think you outvie Miss Freemore ? She has a more pleasing person, a much livelier disposition, and perhaps a better understanding than you ; her vanity is owing to her always living in the great world, and being used, at a
very

very early age, to the most fulsome flattery. To be sure she is gayer than you ; but that gaiety, which is excusable in the daughter of Lord Freemore, would be inexcusable in the daughter of Mr. Melvill ; though that Mr. Melvill has a chance for an earldom. There pride again. Oh, Emma, Emma ! never condemn other people's foibles, till you are certain you are not possessed of them yourself. In this manner did this truly amiable girl, as I hope my readers will allow her to be, reason, till the night was far advanced, and in the morning she found very little refreshment from the sleep she had had.

Not so Woodford ; all sober reflections were set flying before he

retired to rest, and as soon as he was in bed he fell into a slumber, or rather sleep, which lasted till two the next day. He then rose, dressed, and adjourned to the breakfast-parlour, where he was soon joined by Sir Charles Guildford.

Lady Harriot Nevill is a devilish fine woman, cried our hero, after paying his usual compliments. I did not think she had so much *gaiete de cœur*; upon my soul she is a pretty creature. She is a very virtuous woman, I assure you, Woodford, therefore do not speak lightly of her.

Lightly of her! who the devil speaks, or even thinks light of her! I dare swear she is no worse than
most

most of her sex, for they are all confounded jilts.

Hold, hold, George ! don't dare to rank Lady Harriot among the jilts ; there are too many at present in the female line, yet there are exceptions.

I don't believe it, Guildford ; they are all alike, ready to jump into our mouths one moment, and cut our throats the next.

Why, man, what ails you ? I always thought you the champion of a woman. Prithee tell me what happened at Melvill's yesterday to put you in this fuss.

E 4 O ! name

Oh ! name them not. That little coquette, Emma, has—but no matter. Do you pay your addresses to Lady Harriot ?

Hum ! Do I pay my addresses to Lady Harriot ! Whence that question, George ? Do you propose to rival me ? Not I, by my faith, my friend.

Why I thought you were too honest for that, or on my honour I would not have presented you to her ; but to confess the truth, I thought your affections engaged.

My affections engaged, Charles ! —to whom, pray ? To whom ! why to Miss Melvill. O Charles ! (striking his breast) thou hast struck a dag-

a dagger to my heart ! Why did you not open my eyes sooner, or rather, why was I so blind !

Why, Woodford, you amaze me ! Is it possible you could really be blind to the wishes of your honoured parents ! the wishes of the Melvills ! nay, even the sweet girl herself ! Did not the blushes and the tremor she betrayed at your approach, convince you how dear you were to her ? you who are sensible to the attention of every giddy, simple female ; but, because her esteem was wrapt in modest garment, you could not perceive it. 'Tis true, I saw you flighted her, yet I laid it chiefly to your insufferable vanity, which, I made no doubt, you would get the better of

in a few years, else on my honour, Woodford, I should have paid my addressee to her before now.

How ! cried our hero, starting from his reverie, you have paid your addressee to her ! What pretensions had you ?

I or any other man had pretensions, George, if she was slighted by the one she honoured with her regard.

Death and fury ! cried the other, rising from his seat, what do you mean ! Hold, hold, my friend, cried Sir Charles, laughing ; moderate your passion ; my affections are engaged elsewhere at present ; sit down and hear me patiently. From
the

the first of my knowing you, I have seen your faults and your virtues. The greatest of your faults, so at least I am willing to believe, is your vanity. I could plainly see, if Miss Melvill had treated you with the indifference your behaviour merited, you would have striven to have pleased her more ; (here George felt a twinge of conscience) but as she strove all in her power to procure you amusement, and paid you all the little attentions consistent with a modest woman, without any fulsome flattery, or indelicate praises (for indelicate I must call them, when issued from a lady's mouth to a man), you slighted her for the first flirt that came in your way. I can see by your countenance, George, I speak disagreeable truths ;
but

but if I wish to serve you, I cannot do otherwise. I am certain you admire Miss Melvill, else I should not have ventured to introduce so dangerous a rival, as I am certain you would prove, were you villain enough to make offers after knowing my pretensions to Lady Harriot Nevill. He stopped.

I cannot forbear smiling, returned Woodford, at the very odd manner in which you deliver your sentiments. You have told me more plain truths than I was ever told before in my life. I wish with all my soul you had told me them sooner; for, believe me, I never knew till yesterday, how dear Emma Melvill was to me—nay, not till this conversation, had I the least idea of loving her. Her treatment
yes-

yesterday hurt and confounded me ; yet I could not think I loved her. But you, my friend, have opened my eyes, and I shall certainly take the first opportunity to try if she has any spark of affection left for me. As to Lady Harriot, be assured I will guard my heart from any attack it may receive from her bright eyes, as I know your views ; and may we always remain as steady friends as we are this moment. They here shook hands, and being near four o'clock, Sir Charles took his leave, and our hero retired to dress. He came home about one in the morning, in a soberer state than he had been for some months ; he retired to his bed, but did not find that repose he sought ; he thought of all what Sir Charles had said ;

said ; he compared his manner of life now with the calm and serene hours he had spent at Woodford-house ; for he thought of his father's words on his departure for college ; he shuddered when he reviewed the plan he was now pursuing, and determined from that hour to reform, to pay his addressee to Miss Melvill, lay aside the coxcomb, and at once sink into the plain, honest country gentleman—a character his father often had boasted of. With this resolution he fell asleep ; but how he kept it, my readers, if they have patience, will see. But I dare say there are many of my female ones of my mind, and consider a man's resolution to be no more than the falling leaf, which is subject to every breath
of

of wind. They boast of their courage and their honour; the latter lies in their tongue, the first I am sadly afraid, craving their pardons, in their heels. The honour of a gentleman used, in days of yore, to be his bond, but now it is a word of course; it too often serves as a cloak for the basest purposes, and at the same time that it renders the man a villain, debases the object of his pursuit to the lowest of all human beings. But forgive me, my gentle readers, for thus intruding, and troubling you with remarks, which must, I am certain, sound ill from me, who have so narrow a judgment to make them. But not to trespass further on your patience, I will proceed with my history.

Mr.

Mr. Woodford rose the next morning at eleven, breakfasted, put on an elegant undress, threw himself into his carriage at one, and proceeded to Brook-street. He was informed there was only Miss Melvill at home ; this was the person he wanted. He stepped out, and was ushered into the drawing-room, where he found her, with another young lady, just equipped for a walk. Emma turned pale when she heard his name announced ; but a rosy blush quickly succeeded that paleness when she beheld him. He advanced towards her with a graceful, yet timid air, and taking her hand, hoped he had the pleasure of seeing her well. She answered in a tremulous voice, at the same time desired he would sit down, which, after

after paying his compliment to the other lady, he did. After a few moments silence, Miss Melvill asked him if he had not seen her brother George, which he answered in the negative.

He intended calling, but, added she with a smile, I suppose he thought you were not up so soon as he went out.

Oh, madam, replied he, (the soft smile that Emma put on having revived his spirits) I don't always sleep so late ; but the sad hours one is obliged to keep here in town, makes one slug a-bed in a morning. But you are not always necessitated to keep such sad hours, Mr. Woodford, Fashion, my dear Miss Melvill,

vill, compels one often to act against one's judgment. It is very true, answered Miss Haverford, (the young lady that was with Emma) for I suppose, sir, you are like the rest of your sex, who think they might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion.

Not absolutely so, madam, neither. 'Tis true, I like to enjoy life while I can, and hope I shall always have it in my power. But I am afraid, ladies, I hinder you from going out, at the same time rising. We were only going to the park, replied Emma. Will you permit me the pleasure of accompanying you then, madam? O yes, sir, if you are not otherwise engaged, we shall have no objection to a
beau.

beau. What say you, Miss Haverford? O, none in the least, my dear. *Je suis tout-a-fait pret.*

They now sallied forth, our hero having given orders, as he went out, for his carriage to return home. The conversation was spirited and agreeable on all sides, and Emma never had appeared to such advantage in the eyes of George as she did that morning. In the park they met Sir Charles Guildford, who immediately joined them. He was heartily pleased to find his hints had taken effect on his friend (as he really had a very great regard for him), and thought he would be happier with such a woman as Miss Melvill for a wife, than any of the modern ladies. He therefore could
not

not help taking some merit to himself, for thus having brought them together. On their return to Brookstreet, the gentlemen would have taken their leave, but Miss Melvill being informed by the servant, that her papa and mama were come home, desired them to walk in. Mr. and Mrs. Melvill were pleased to see Woodford with their daughter, and gave both him and Sir Charles the most kind reception. As it grew late they would not sit down; but Mr. Melvill told them, if they would excuse the shortness of the notice, he should be glad of their company to dinner, adding, with a smile, we don't dine till five to-day, as we have company. The gentlemen assented, and hurried home to dress.

Miss

Miss Melvill's spirits had not been so elated for some months; she was quite a new creature. Mr. and Mrs. Melvill, with pleasure, saw this alteration in their beloved child, as they had feared for her health very much of late. Miss Haverford, when they retired to dress, rallied her friend on the surprising change in her spirits. Dear Sabina, answered Emma, blushing, what mean you? O, the pretty innocent would make one believe the sight of Mr. Woodford was not pleasing to her. My dear girl, how you talk; we have known one another from our infancy. What! then this is the Mr. Woodford I have heard so much of? Well, he is certainly a very pretty fellow. The

The hair-dresser entering, prevented any further discourse.

Some of my readers, perhaps, may be curious to know, who Miss Haverford is. She was the daughter of an officer who was at this time in America; he had left his daughter (Mrs. Haverford having been dead some years) in the care of his sister, who resided not far from Mr. Melvill's house in Herts. Miss Melvill's acquaintance with Sabina, began at school, which ever since had been constantly kept up. On the Melvills coming to town, they persuaded Miss Haverford's aunt to let her accompany them. Sabina was about twenty, agreeable in her person and disposition; she sincerely loved Miss Melvill, and
was

was indeed worthy of the title of friend. Her fortune, she knew, was small, and she always took care to suit her expences to that fortune. She had no ambitious views, nor did she envy any one that appeared better than herself. Though endowed with great spirits, she seldom exerted them, and she possessed the useful art of accommodating her temper to the company she was in.

Mr. Woodford and Sir Charles entered Mr. Melvill's drawing-room as the clock struck five ; there was a large company, but none that they knew. There were several very pretty women present, but our hero attached himself to Miss Melvill alone ; he was polite to the rest of the ladies, but no more ; his con-

conversation was, as usual, and pleasing, and every one got up from table charmed with him. About ten the company took their leave, but Mr. Melvill desired Mr. Woodford and Sir Charles would stay supper; they did, and about one in the morning parted, mutually satisfied with each other. Well, George, said Sir Charles, things seem *en bon train* between you and Emma now. I hope they are, my friend; but to-morrow I shall decide it, as I shall most certainly ask Mr. Melvill's consent to address his daughter. The carriage stopped at Sir Charles's, and the two friends having wished each other a *bon repos*, parted. About twelve the next day George went to Brook-street, and having enquired for Mr Melvill, was

was conducted to his library. The old gentleman received him with his usual affability, and taking him by the hand, desired him to be seated. To what cause, my young friend, am I to attribute this early visit? said Mr. Melvill. Emboldened, sir, by the friendship you always professed for my dear deceased parents, and the notice you have honoured me with, I am come to solicit your permission to lay myself and fortune at the feet of your amiable daughter.

Is it possible that the gay George Woodford can, at so early an age, tamely sink into the sober state of matrimony! Have you well considered what you are about? Though it is a match that I believe

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your

your worthy parents wished for, as you were brought up together from your most early infancy, and it was natural to suppose a mutual inclination might take place; but at the same time, sir, I would rather see my daughter the wife of a common mechanic, than the wife of the richest gentleman in England, if I thought she could be happier with the former than the latter.

I hope, sir, whenever I marry, I shall lay aside, with the assistance of my wife, any foolish fopperies I may now be possessed of. I should wish, if agreeable to the lady I marry, to imitate my father's steps, and sink into the plain country gentleman. That plan, I am certain, would be most agreeable to my
Emma,

Emma; if she is your destined wife. I give my consent most freely, and think I can insure that of Mrs. Melvill. As to the lady herself, smiling, I will conduct you, when you may hear your doom from her own lips.

Our hero sprung from his seat, and bending one knee to the ground, kissed the hand of Mr. Melvill, with a transport he at that moment really felt. Fair and softly, young man, be not too hasty, you have not the lady's consent yet; and besides, I will have nothing hurried, you must go through a long probation, and lay aside the coxcomb, fine gentleman (nay, frown not), before you enter the bonds of Hymen. George certainly did frown, but it

was quickly succeeded by a smile. But how long a probation, my good sir, am I to undergo?

Perhaps a year or two. Good heavens, sir, why did you not name a century! You might as well.

No, not quite so long as that neither; but there are many preliminaries to settle. There may be a great change in my affairs in the course of a few months, which will enable me to make the fortune of Emma much larger than it is at present. I hope, sir, you have not so mean an opinion of me, as to think I have any interested views in offering myself for your son-in-law. You, I believe, sir, know
the

the exact limits of my estate, which is but small.

But don't you think that estate is lessened by the present expences you are at? These are dear times, my young friend, and I hear you have an elegant house, a great many servants, carriages, horses, &c. &c. &c.

Woodford started at this last speech; he had never till that moment thought of his expences; he had scarce paid any bills since he became master of his own actions; he found every one ready to trust him, and had not thought till that moment they must be discharged. Mr. Melvill saw his confusion with some pain, but resolved, just then,

not to notice it : he therefore arose. Come, Mr. Woodford, shall I conduct you to Emma ? This roused our hero from his reverie, and quickly dispelled every uneasy idea from his breast. Mr. Melvill led him to the drawing-room, where his daughter was reading ; as he opened the door, he said, I have brought you a gentleman, Emma, whose conversation, perhaps, may be more entertaining than your book, for (taking Woodford by the hand) we make but a sorry appearance when we first make love : nay, don't blush child ; if this gentleman can find the way to your heart, I present him to you as your future husband ; and so, good folks, I wish you a good morning, as I have already wasted a great deal of
time

time on you. In this jocular manner did Mr. Melvill leave the room, and left the lovers to enjoy a private *tete-a-tete*.

Now methinks I see the miss of fifty, with a simpering smile, prepared to read a delightful love-scene ; she stops to count the years since she heard of flames and darts ; a blush tinges her maiden cheek, when she recollects almost a dozen years since she heard the soft words—I love and adore ; she sits and muses for some time, but at length catches up her book, and finds—what ?—a disappointment. It is very true, ladies, for perhaps the miss of fifteen would have no objection to hear how Mr. Woodford made his first address to Miss

F 4 Melvill ;

Melvill ; but, ladies, you must excuse me ; no one has ever made love to me, and as Miss Emma would not repeat the dialogue, I must, through necessity, omit it.

Certain it is, however, that Emma gave her lover all the encouragement a modest young lady ought to give ; and certain also it is, that the clock had warned them of its being half past three, before George thought of taking his leave. He then rose, and kissing her hand, withdrew. In the hall he met Mr. Melvill, who, with a smile, asked him, if he did not propose returning to dinner ? He answered in the affirmative. Well then, said Mr. Melvill (clapping him on the shoulder) you won't spend much time
at

at your looking-glass, for I will not wait longer than half past four. Mr. Woodford only answered with a bow and a smile, and hurried away.

George's spirits were too much exhilarated to let any uneasy thoughts enter into his head; he rapt at his door with so many agreeable ideas, that he was scarce sensible, when the servant put a card into his hand; he glanced his eye over it, put it into his pocket, and would have quitted the house without sending an answer, if his valet had not put him in mind of it; he then read it, and found it was from the Countess of Farmley, inviting him to dinner the next day. He considered a little, but vanity

F 5 obtruded

obtruded itself, and he determined to go to the countess's, that he might once more have the pleasure of seeing and conversing with Lady Harriot. As soon as he had made some necessary alteration in his dress, he stepped into his carriage, and proceeded to Brook-street. The day was spent in a style very agreeable to our hero, as there was no company (not even Miss Haverford, as she had been out the whole day) to interrupt his discourse to Miss Melvill. Mr. Harry Melvill was both surprised and mortified to find that Woodford was the declared lover of his sister; he, however, disguised his thoughts so well, that George really thought he was sincere in the joy he pretended to feel. Mr. Woodford took
his

his leave at ten, as he was engaged to sup with a party at Sir Charles Guildford's. As soon as he was gone, Mr. Henry set his wits to work, to say something flighting of him, but it was to no purpose; he had left so fair a character behind him, that Harry knew that no one would be of his side. When Miss Melvill retired to her chamber, she had time to ruminate on all that had passed in the day; the agreeable flutter her spirits had been put into in the morning, hindered her from making any reflection on the consequences that might ensue from her being the wife of Woodford. Can I, thought she to herself, ever suppose he will be constant to me? is he not one of the handsomest men in the world? and
will

will not every woman be in love with him? Most certainly. He will, perhaps, give them encouragement, and I am too sensible I could not bear his slighting me. No, Woodford, you never can be mine! Yet, silly as I am, why should I thus torment myself? Has not my papa told me, nothing shall be hurried, and that he should blame me much to marry him, till I see he is entirely cured of his puppyism?—rather a rash name that, to be obliged to give to one who is to be a husband! At length her ideas were suspended by her falling asleep.

Woodford was not home till four in the morning, and then was incapable of moving, much more of thinking; he tumbles into bed,
nor

nor did, or at least would not, wake (for he did not want for calling) till near three in the day. Having, at length, jumbled himself awake, and had his breakfast, he thought of Miss Melvill. He knew he ought to pay his respects to her, but at the same time was convinced it was then too late, as she would then be dressing. He first thought of writing a card to make an excuse for not calling that day, but on second thoughts, he determined to dress as soon as possible, and go to Brook-street before he went to the Countess of Farmley's, as she would not dine till near six. This being settled, he prepared, and at five was ready to step into his carriage. As he passed the looking-glass, he could not help viewing it,
and

and vanity whispered him, he could not fail to charm.—Vanity certainly told him truth, for a more elegant figure could not be looked at. Miss Melvill had expected him the whole day, but now gave him up. They had company to dinner, but the ladies had just quitted the dining-parlour, when a violent rap at the street-door announced a visiter. Emma felt her face glow as he entered; he cast his eyes around, bowed gracefully, and advanced to Emma; she had never seen him dressed with so much taste as he was that evening, and could not suppress a sigh, at hearing he was going again so soon.

Mr. Melvill came in, and seeing George, are you there? Why did you

you not come to dinner, my young friend ?

I was denied that pleasure, fir, as I am engaged to the Countess of Farmley's, and only called to pay my respects to Miss Melvill, *en passant*, as I was prevented in the forenoon by a most cruel head-ach.

O then, you have not dined ?
No, fir, (looking at his watch) and I must now be under the necessity of bidding this agreeable party adieu. He then kissed the hand of Miss Melvill, bowed to the rest of the company, and quitted the room. Mr. Melvill attended him to the head of the stairs, and desired he would take a dinner there whenever he liked, and wished him a good
appetite

appetite to the one he was going to. George had no sooner quitted the room, than every tongue burst forth at once in his praise : Miss Melvill's blushes shewed she was interested in those praises, yet there was one person whom she could have wished had not been there. This was a Miss Finley, only daughter of Sir Robert Finley. She had a large fortune, independent of her father ; add to this, a very handsome face, united to the most elegant figure in the world. Emma knew but little of her, as she was merely a town acquaintance ; but she could not help perceiving, that George's eyes were fixed on her the whole time he was in the room ; for which reason she was not sorry at hearing he was going,

as

as she knew it would be very unlucky they should meet again, as her father proposed going out of town very soon. This, however, did quiet her fears for the present. Certain it is she had some reason for those fears, as the image of Miss Finley occupied the thoughts of our hero till he entered the house of the Countess of Farmley.

They were already in the dining-parlour, when Mr. Woodford was announced, but as he entered, all eyes were fixed on him. The countess said they had given him up. He made his excuses with his usual grace, and took his seat. Dinner being over, they adjourned to the drawing-room, where Woodford had more leisure to observe the
com-

company. He found the ladies all *passablement bien*, but none that could pretend to vie with lady Harriot Nevill; he whispered this to Guildford, who was there. Very true, answered he, nor Emma Melvill neither, I fancy. George bowed, but made no reply. The greatest part of the company having taken their leave, the countess proposed going to Ranelagh; her daughter assented, and Sir Charles and Mr. Woodford attended them.

'Twas almost twelve when they entered the rotundo, and the first people they met were the Melvills; our hero bowed, but passed on; Miss Melvill turned her head round, and could not help a sigh at the uncommon beauty of Lady Harriot. As
the

the former party were entering a box, two ladies came up and saluted the countess and her daughter.

Lord, my dear Harriot! we have been searching all round for a box, and can't find one.

Here is full room in our's, replied Lady Harriot, you had better take a seat here; they instantly complied, and seated themselves. Our hero was next to this valuable lady, whose tongue scarce ever lay still. The conversation was kept up with great spirit between George and Lady Susan Flutter (the lady above-mentioned), which highly diverted the rest of the party. Three times did the Melvills pass, but Woodford was too deeply engaged with
Lady

Lady Susan, to see any one except several gentlemen who stopped to speak.

Poor Emma felt herself hurt at the neglect of George, as she had vainly thought he would have joined them as soon as politeness would have let him ; but not even a look or smile did he once bestow on her. Mr. and Mrs. Melvill observed his behaviour with the deepest regret. Will he never, thought they, leave off this foolish foppery, till he has suffered severely for it ? Mr. Henry Melvill observed his behaviour with far different sensations ; he found there would be no need of his appearing against him, as he would sufficiently work himself out of favour. These were their
different

different thoughts when they quitted the fashionable resort.

The countess's party did not leave the place till near four in the morning, and then Lady Susan begged Lady Harriot to spare one of her beaux to accompany herself and Miss Darnley (her companion) home, her ladyship protesting she was afraid of returning alone. Most certainly, returned Lady Harriot with a smile, choose, I lay my life they are both equally willing to attend your ladyship. O, they shall choose. For heaven's sake, let me be the candidate ! cried our hero. Lady Susan's smiles plainly evinced he was the one she would have chosen ; and her ladyship's carriage being the first drawn up, they

they wished a good morning to the others, and were handed into it by Mr. Woodford. He now made love to Lady Susan in very plain terms, not in the least minding Miss Darnley, who was only humble companion to her ladyship, and likewise, being very plain, served as a foil, therefore was mute, except now and then a titter at some extravagant compliment paid by Woodford to Lady Susan. When the coach stopped he handed them out, assuring her ladyship, that his heart was almost bursting at the thoughts of parting with her so soon.

Ah, you are a wicked flatterer! returned she; but, however, you may come and breakfast, if you will, to-morrow

to-morrow with us. George promised he would, kissed the hand of Lady Susan, and again ascended the carriage, which her ladyship insisted should convey him home.

It may not be here improper to give some little sketch of this lady. The reader has been already informed she was very handsome; conscious of this, her whole time was spent in the improvement of her charms, which in reality wanted none. Her mind was her least study, she cared not for that, provided she could make herself agreeable to the male sex, in which she never hardly failed, as she had a great deal of humour joined with levity. Her fortune was sufficient, but not large; she kept not a great deal

deal of company, as it was not every family that received her ; and in all probability, the Countess of Farmley would not have countenanced her, only she was distantly related to them ; and though they knew her to be an arrant coquette, they did not imagine her guilty of any false steps ; nor was she, as she took care to jilt all her lovers ; nor would she be persuaded to marry, though there was one who would have her, would she have consented. This was no other than young Freemore ; he liked her person and fortune much, her mind he cared not for ; he knew, if they did not agree, they could live as Lord and Lady Freemore did. However it was more than a twelvemonth that he had dangled after her, and found him-

himself not a jot the nearer, as whenever he talked of marriage, she only laughed at him, which almost determined him to look for some less cruel fair. Her ladyship cared very little about him, but as she had hitherto found him very willing to dangle after her, she determined to keep him in her train; but now she had met with our hero, she resolved, if possible, to fix him for her own, as she had never seen a man she so well liked before. She, therefore, took very little time for sleep, but rose early to adorn herself to the best advantage.

George, in the mean time, was snoring away in his bed; and though he had been thrice called by his valet, had not stirred. His

table-clock now struck one; at the sound he jumped up, and swore at the man for not waking him before; but he having assured him he had repeatedly called him, he was pacified, and hastened to dress. It was past two when he got to Lady Susan's, whom he found still waiting breakfast; he made a thousand apologies, but swore it was his cursed taylor who had kept him fidgiting about the colour of his clothes for the birthday. Lady Susan, happy to see him, begged he would not speak of it. Their conversation was very spirited, and they had been above two hours *tete-a-tete* (for Miss Darnley was gone out) before Woodford thought of departing. He at length took his leave, not without a pref-

a pressing invitation to return and dine; this he refused, but promised to take a cup of tea with her ladyship in the evening. He now quitted the house, but as he was walking he must unavoidably pass the end of Brook-street; till the moment that he saw the name of this street, never had he once recollected that he ought to have called on Miss Melvill. He looked at his watch, but found he was as much too late this day as he had been the preceding one; he was therefore under the necessity of returning home without seeing her then, but determined to send an excuse to Lady Susan for not waiting on her according to promise, and go to Brook-street, and drink tea. He went about seven, and found only Miss

Melvill and Miss Haverford. Emma received him at first rather coldly, but George made an apology, by saying business had detained him in the morning, else he should have paid his compliments before then. After he had sat some time, Miss Haverford asked him what time he left Ranelagh. He told her; when she said, pray, sir, who was the lady in the blue? (meaning Lady Susan Flutter). When he had informed her, Miss Melvill asked if he had known her ladyship before. I never saw her in my life, my dear madam, till last night.

Then I don't wonder at your being so struck with her, says Miss Haverford. Who! me, madam, struck with Lady Susan! Indeed
you

you mistake, she is not at all a woman to my taste.

I think Lady Harriot Nevill very handsome, said Emma.

Yes, madam, she certainly is; and I think she will make a most excellent wife to Sir Charles Guildford.

What, is she engaged to Sir Charles! replied Emma, somewhat hastily. Not absolutely engaged, as I believe Guildford has not yet declared his passion, as he is not sure but her ladyship prefers some other man to him, though I think he is mistaken, added he carelessly. Those last words were certainly uttered to make Emma believe Sir

Charles was jealous of him, as he observed she was pleased to hear she was engaged to his friend. He had not the least difficulty in making her believe this, as she had perceived Lady Harriot listened both with attention and pleasure to all what he said ; neither did Woodford utter so great a falsity as he imagined, for certain it is that Lady Harriot admired him much. It may appear odd to my readers, when I say she liked him and Sir Charles too. She knew in her own mind, that Guildford would make the best husband of the two, as he was not quite so vain, nor quite so fond of his person as Woodford. However she kept her thoughts to herself, as Sir Charles had never declared himself her lover, and
Wood-

Woodford treated every woman with the same gallantry as herself; she was not downright in love with either, and determined to keep herself out of Cupid's chains as long as possible. Sir Charles, on the other hand, was in fact not a little jealous of his friend; he knew he was a dangerous man among the females, as he made himself agreeable to every one; for this reason he determined to speak to George about Miss Melvill; he did, and what passed the reader is already acquainted with. He then found, that though he liked to flirt with every woman that came in his way, Miss Melvill was in possession of his heart; this made him easy, and he resolved in due time to address Lady Harriot.

Mr. and Mrs. Melvill soon after this came home, and George spent the evening very agreeably ; for though he was received by all parties with great coldness at first, he soon contrived to dispel the gloom by his entertaining vivacity. In short, though the whole family saw with regret a number of faults he was possessed of, they could not bring themselves to cast him off, as they attributed them to his youth and vanity. Emma indeed thought more of them than any one else : often would she say to herself—can I think of marrying this man, if he is willing even to have me ?—can I think to keep one whom all the world does and must admire, and one too so fond of its admiration ? Ah ! no ; we were not born for one
another

another I am afraid ! In this manner would she reason, and sometimes almost resolve to forget him ; but his sight would instantaneously banish such an idea, and some newly-discovered *agrement* would make her regard him more than ever. Some of my readers may condemn my fair heroine for this ; but they must consider they had been brought up together from children, and always regarded one another as brother and sister.

The Melvills thought of quitting town in two days, which they told Mr. Woodford, at the same time asking him if he would accompany them, or come after. He answered, as they went before the birth-day, it would not be in

his power to attend them, but that important affair being over, he would fly to Melvill-hall immediately. They were satisfied with this, and desired he would spend the next day with them, as they should set off the following morning. When he returned home he was presented with a *billet* from Lady Susan Flutter, who expressed great sorrow at not having seen him, but hoped nothing would prevent his breakfasting with her the next morning. George, not in the best spirits imaginable, laid the note upon his table, and entirely forgot to send an excuse, and in the morning he was in too great a hurry, as he was to breakfast in Brook-street at an earlier hour than usual. Lady Susan was surprised at having
ing

ing no answer, but thought he would come ; but in this she was disappointed, and after waiting some hours, she sent a servant to know if he was not yet stirring. The man returned with answer, that Mr. Woodford had been out ever since nine o'clock, and they did not expect him home before bedtime. She felt herself not a little piqued at this neglect ; she therefore ordered her carriage, thinking that the air might dispel her chagrin ; but as the coach was driving up Brook-street, she saw Woodford standing at a parlour window, with a young lady by his side, one of whose hands was pressing to his lips, while she presented to him a rose with the other. Lady Susan, almost bursting with rage, looked out

out of the coach window in hopes of catching his eyes, but in vain ; he was too deeply engaged with her fair rival to pay any attention to her ladyship. She went home in a much worse humour than she came out, and remained the same the whole day. It has been before observed that Lady Susan was a very great coquette, but in spite of this, she had escaped Cupid's arrows, till shot from the bright eyes of our hero. She really loved him, and would willingly have given up all her other admirers for him. She therefore, after an hour's meditation, determined to send a servant to enquire who inhabited that house, she having taken particular notice of it. The footman soon returned with the desired information, that
it

it was a ready-furnished house, and that the present family who now occupied it, had taken it for three months, but the time being expired, they intended going into the country the next day ; that their names were Melvill, and that they kept very genteel company. This was all the fellow could learn, and Lady Susan was forced to be content. In the mean time Miss Melvill and Mr. Woodford were so mutually pleased with the conversation of each other, that the hours stole imperceptibly away, and eleven o'clock struck before he thought of departing. He now rose, respectfully saluting the ladies, and shaking hands with the gentlemen, wished them a pleasant journey, promising to join them as soon as the birth-day was over.

over. He went directly home, not being fit to go into public, as he was in an undress, and went to bed, to the great surprize of his domestics, who had never known him to retire to rest at so early an hour before. On his rising the next morning he received a card from Lady Susan, inviting him to breakfast. He went, and after her ladyship had gently chid him for his neglect of her the day before, she enquired who the lady was she had seen him with at the window. George's vanity was highly flattered at this, as he found Lady Susan was jealous, for indeed she did not strive to hide it in the least. He told her it was a young lady he had a very great regard for. O, but you wretch ! how dare you say in a woman's

woman's presence, you have a regard for any other !

Heavens ! my dear Lady Susan ! you make a wide difference sure between regard and love ! You cannot imagine that any other woman can hold a place in my heart, while I have reason to think myself beloved by you ! No, (suddenly catching her in his arms) I should deserve to be tortured, to let any other fair one usurp the place you at present hold in my breast ! She affected to scream at the liberty he had taken, declared she would send him away if he behaved so rude again. George laughed at her threats, but kept a greater distance for the remainder of his visit. He
men-

mentioned his being necessitated to go out of town after the birth-day.

Lady Susan expressed great sorrow, and begged he would spend as much time with her as he could conveniently spare from his other friends. He promised he would, and about four took his leave, having engaged himself to dine with her ladyship the next day. In his way home a variety of thoughts engaged his mind; he compared this morning's visit with the day before; the former he had spent in a polite and sensible conversation, without any fulsome compliments being paid to himself, or he being obliged to pay any; yet was he in his heart more pleased with the ridiculous praises of Lady Susan, than

than with the enchanting smiles of Miss Melvill. It is true, thought he to himself, her eyes sometimes tell me she loves, but yet not one compliment does she ever pay either to my person, manners, or understanding, which every other woman does, and sure they can't all be mistaken. No, no; it's owing to the rusticity of her education, which makes her blind to the perfections of others, though I suppose she is not blind to her own, yet I must say, I never saw a woman with less vanity than Emma Melvill: however she will, I dare say, make a good docile wife, and may in time work a reformation in me. He was now at home, and the rest of the day was passed in racket and inebriation.

Lady

Lady Sufan, in the mean time, thought things in a very fair train ; she had no doubts of being the wife of Woodford, nor had she the least doubt of his having as large an estate as his present figure in life made every one think. These thoughts gave her an immoderate flow of spirits, and added a brilliancy to her complexion, which, joined with a studied, elegant, and becoming dress, made her almost look a divinity in the eyes of George, who was there before any of the company had assembled to dinner. The entertainment was elegant and profuse—more profuse, indeed, than her ladyship's generally were ; but she had spared no expence as Mr. Woodford was of the party. Among the other gentlemen

tlement was Mr. Freemore; he was amazed to see George there, not knowing of his intimacy with Lady Susan, yet he did not discover that he was a more favoured lover than himself. Whether it was Mr. Freemore's want of wit, or whether it was the uniform behaviour of Lady Susan to all her admirers, which prevented him making this discovery, I can't pretend to say; but certain it is, that young Freemore went away as well satisfied with his mistress as ever. Our hero, with two ladies, staid supper, and about two in the morning took their leave. Every day did Woodford see Lady Susan, and every day did she expect an offer of his hand; but in this she was always mistaken. He had sworn twenty times he adored

adored her, but never talked of marriage ; this made her uneasy, for though she had hinted to her friends her intention of soon being a wife, yet she was afraid to say to whom, for fear of a disappointment.

The birth-day being over, the families flocked out of town. The Countess of Farmley and Lady Harriot set off for the seat of the Duke of Larlingford, where Sir Charles Guildford was also invited. George took his leave of the ladies previous to their departure, with whom, since presented by Sir Charles, he had been very intimate, and with the latter, received an invitation from the Countess to pay a visit to Farmley Castle at Christmas,

mas, where her ladyship and daughter always chose to be at that inclement season, as they both fed the hungry and cloathed the naked.

The day before Sir Charles set off for the country (for he did not go till a week after the ladies) he called on his friend Woodford, and having told him his intention for the morrow, he desired to know when he designed to set out for Herts. Why, faith, Charles, I hardly know ; about next week, I believe.

Not before ! Don't you think the Melvills will expect you every day, now the birth-day is over ?

That's

That's true enough ; in short I will go as soon as I can. But what the devil ails you, Charles ? you seem afraid to leave me behind you. Lady Harriot is not here, so I shan't run away with her.

No, no ; I am not afraid of your running away with any one, but only for raising your vanity to a higher pitch than it need be, I would tell you, I am afraid of your being run away with.

Oh, ho ! are you thereabouts, my friend ? Faith if any of the pretty creatures have a mind to it, they shall find me an easy conquest.

Thou art a consummate coxcomb, upon my soul, George ;
and

and do you think that any woman would run away with you, but under a notion that you had a large estate? It would serve you right to let you be taken in, only that it might occasion too much pain to an innocent and virtuous breast, and break your own heart in the long run.

Why, what the devil are you driving at? The women to be sure follow our steps pretty closely, yet I don't remember having ever heard of a female knight-errant.

Well then, to be more explicit, as you either are, or pretend to be, confoundedly dull this morning, what are your intentions towards Miss Melvill?

What

What are my intentions towards Miss Melvill ! Why now, craving your pardon, Sir Charles, I think you are dull. Why, am I not engaged to marry her ?

Very well. Now let me ask you, what are your intentions towards Lady Susan Flutter ? nay, put not on that sneering countenance, but answer me seriously.

Upon honour I cannot, Charles. Would you, because I am engaged to Miss Melvill, (and by the bye I am to go through a probation of the devil knows how long) have me run away from every woman who does, or (by way of softening the matter) pretends to fall in love with me ?

But

But have you really the vanity to think that Lady Susan is in love with you !

I have no further proof but by her eyes and her tongue ; and if a man can have better I will be burnt.

Has she really said she loved you ? Why, no, she has not just said the words—I love you ; but she has as good as said it a thousand times.

Then, pray what sort of footing are you on with her ladyship ? Can you take more familiarities with her than any one else of your acquaintance ?

Vol. I.

H

Why,

Why, what a question is that !
Who would ever take you for a
man of the *ton* !

If you are disposed to trifle thus,
sir, I am not, said Sir Charles,
rising and taking his hat, so I will
wish you a good morning.

Nay, nay, Guildford ! don't be
in a pett, man ; but I should
be glad to know, where this long
rigmarole discourse leads to.

As rigmarole, as you may call it,
sir, 'tis merely for your good. I wish
to save you from your ruin ! Nay,
start not ; what I mean by ruin, is
your breaking with the Melvill fa-
mily ; for I am persuaded, were
you to examine your own heart,
you

you have none so dear to you as are in that family. But if you go on in the mode you at present do, a break is unavoidable. Within this fortnight, every one has said you are the declared admirer of Lady Susan; nay, even the Countess of Farmley spoke of it to me; and don't you think that the news will soon travel to Hertfordshire? Yet, George, mistake me not, if you have been a villain to her ladyship, you ought and must make her reparation.

Sir Charles, your last speech requires a serious answer. I can solemnly assure you, I have never had as yet any connections which may cause a break with the Melvill family. As to Lady Susan, nothing

but common gallantry has passed between us. To be sure I may I believe say without vanity, that she has no dislike to me ; but I have never given her room to think I would make her my wife ; and my conscience would acquit me if I was to set off for Herts this instant, without seeing her ladyship, and marry Miss Melvill. Yet, my friend, my heart is still Emma's, and I think will ever remain so : thus I hope I have satisfied your scruples. (Sir Charles shook his head) Yes, my friend, you have in some points I own ; but am sorry you have need of *I think*, to keep your heart for Miss Melvill alone ; but however this summer will, I hope, rivet the fetters of love, too fast to be ever after loosened. The entrance

entrance of Sir James Sedley put a stop to any further discourse, and after agreeing to dine together at the Thatched House, they parted as good friends as ever. Sir Charles the next day set off for Larlingford Abbey, with a mind rather disturbed with jealousy. The truth was, that Lady Harriot, two days before she went into the country, asked Sir Charles if his friend Mr. Woodford really had an intention of marrying Lady Susan Flutter. He was surprised at this question, at the same time telling her, it was the first word he had ever heard of it.

I am not certain of the truth of this circumstance, returned her ladyship; 'tis only by distant hints;

H 3

but

but as Mr. Woodford is a friend of yours, Sir Charles, I speak of it, as my cousin has a very small fortune.

You are very good, madam, to thus concern yourself about my friend; but I am almost convinced he is engaged to a lady whom he has known from his infancy.

O then, sir, Lady Susan's hopes, if she has any, must be vain, as Mr. Woodford's appearance has hitherto bespoke him a man of too much sense and honour to give hopes to one woman while engaged to another. Here Lady Harriot proceeded to a different subject, but Guildford had very little spirits to join in it. He thought
her

her ladyship had too high an opinion of George for his repose, yet he could not perceive she betrayed any uneasiness at hearing Woodford was engaged. After reasoning with himself some time, he began to think he might be wrong; he knew he had not as yet offered himself to her ladyship, though had it not been for his friend, he would in all probability have done so before then. He knew George to be a dangerous fellow among the females, he also knew his insufferable vanity would make him loath to sink into the domestic man too hastily. He had as yet no occasion to doubt either his integrity or his friendship; yet as love might go before honour, he did not know but he might offer himself to Lady Harriot,

but the conversation already related, preceding his departure for the country, had satisfied his scruples, and he determined the first opportunity to address Lady Harriot.

Our hero on the departure of his friend, ordered preparations to be made for his journey on the following day, but determined to make one more visit to Lady Susan before he went. He found her ladyship pensive and uneasy when he advanced towards her, there was a distant, cold politeness, which astonished her; his discourse was constrained, and in short, the whole tenor of his behaviour was altered. Shocked at this change, she scarce knew how to act, but on his mentioning his intended journey the
next

next day, she was ready to sink. At length pride got the better of her disappointment, and she determined, if possible, to pique his vanity ; as he was rising to go, he took her hand, which she hastily withdrew.

Excuse me, sir ; I was loath to be ill-bred, especially as I first met with you in the company of the Countess of Farmley ; but the freedom of your behaviour lately has occasioned great uneasiness to me, as well as pain to my friends ; therefore, sir, all further intimacy must cease between us, and as I have been led into an error, I shall place my affections where they will be more gratefully received.

H 5

With

With this she rung the bell for the servant to open the door, and with a distant curtesy left the room. George instantly quitted the house, not less astonished than abashed at so cavalier a dismissal. It was the first affront from a female he had ever received, and it was some moments before he could shake off the chagrin it occasioned. In the meantime, Lady Susan was delighted at what she had said, and determined to give her hand to Mr. Freemore, and in his next solicitation, which was in a month afterwards, she did.

About one o'clock on the 16th of June, Mr. Woodford's chaise stopped at Melvill-hall. Emma was in the garden, which her father

ther informed our hero of, who immediately followed. She perceived him at a distance, which gave her an opportunity to recover the palpitations she always experienced after any absence from him. He paid her many compliments, which she only received with blushes, and soon shifted the conversation to a more (at least to her) pleasing topic. They soon after entered the house, where George received a hearty welcome from Mrs. Melvill, who on his arrival was out. The first month was spent very agreeably, and the time did not appear so irksome to their young visiter as he had at first apprehended; but about this time an affair happened, which occasioned

Emma

Emma many heart-rending sighs,
and our hero all his misfortunes.

It has already been mentioned he had left Woodford-house for three years; it were a gentleman and his wife, of small fortune, who were the inhabitants. Mr. and Mrs. Framfield had, on the Melvills coming down, formed an intimacy with them, which was very agreeable to both parties. They were good neighbours and very much at the hall. As they were one day at dinner, Mrs. Framfield said she expected a niece of her's from the north the next day; and I hope, Miss Melvill, you will be obliging enough to give her a good deal of your company, that she may profit by your example, as she is quite
inex-

inexperienced, and seen very little of the world. Emma blushed and bowed, saying she should be very happy to be acquainted with the young lady, but feared her inability of setting an example, as she made no doubt but that her own sense could direct her much better. Nothing more was then said on the subject, and the Framfields soon after took their leave. George, who by this time found himself rather inclined to be splenetic, felt an inward curiosity at the mention of this stranger; he was almost sick of the amusements of the country, and began to sigh for the pleasures of some public place. There were few assemblies, neither did the Melvills always go, though they missed but one this season, out of complaisance

plaisance to their visiter. Woodford, however, thought a new face would diversify the scene a little, and expected her arrival with impatience, but it was the latter end of the next week before she made her appearance. As she will make some figure in this history, a more succinct account may not be improper. Miss Mary Bevill was the only daughter of a merchant in the north of England ; she was about twenty, middle size, and geteelly made ; her features were exceeding good and regular, fine dark blue eyes, with a vivacity in them which could scarce fail to charm ; she was stiled good-natured, but was one of those who would never hurt herself to serve a friend ; where she took a fancy she could be very friendly, but she
was

was too shy to make her sentiments known, till she had found those *out* of her companion ; she had read much, but studied the vicious characters more than the good ; she had as yet seen but little of the world, her father having told her (her mother being dead) she must by her beauty make her fortune, as he had little or none to give her ; add to this, he had lately married again. She had but few accomplishments, as Mr. Bevill thought reading and writing was enough for any woman ;—French, music, and drawing, she was an entire stranger to, and I may say dancing, for though she could make shift to dance a Scotch reel with the northern lads and lasses, she was utterly unacquainted with any of
our

our fashionable dances. For this reason she wanted the graceful carriage of Miss Melvill, though she certainly surpassed her in beauty. This Emma very well knew, as well as George, who the first moment he saw Mary, thought he had never seen any one half so lovely; she, on the other hand, was as much struck with him.

Her aunt had given her their several characters, but had said no more of Mr. Woodford (for indeed she knew no more for certain) than that he was a visiter at the Hall. It cannot be wondered at, that Miss Bevill determined to aim at making a conquest of our hero, nor was her determination altered at sight of him. She observed Emma
Melvill

Melvill well, and resolved to pay her court to her, in order to gain her confidence, as she had, from the first visit, some suspicion of George's engagement to her, not from his behaviour, but more from the watchful eyes of the lady.

Miss Melvill could not indeed be very well satisfied at the behaviour of her lover to Miss Bevill, to whom, while she staid, he shewed every attention in his power. When she was gone, he tried to assume his usual gaiety, but it was impossible; he lay under a restraint he could not get the better of. The gentle Emma saw his uneasiness with concern; she was considerate enough to allow for the powerful attractions of her rival, yet a sigh escaped her

her when she reflected upon the frailty of his disposition, and that every new face he saw, he was in love with. These were her reflections when she retired to rest : —his were far different. He never once entertained the thought of giving up Emma as a wife, but determined to get Mary, if possible, for a mistress. He admired her very much, and indeed worked himself into the belief that he could not live without her. He took her for an ignorant country girl, but in this he was mistaken ; he had seen her but once, but that once conveyed a too powerful opiate to be easily expelled. The next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, he walked out, and his feet insensibly led him to Woodford-house.

As

As he entered he met Miss Bevill ; having had no time to be modernized, her dress was neat and rustic, which only served to heighten her beauty. Our hero paid her so many compliments, that one endowed with less vanity than she, might have supposed herself a goddess. Unfortunately for George, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Framfield were in the way ;—I say unfortunately, as he enjoyed a *tete-a-tete* with Mary, uninterrupted for near three hours ; during which time she played her cards so well, that he was more in love with her than he ever was with any woman in his life. Miss Melvill was forgot, and his whole soul was absorbed in the idea of Mary Bevill. But as his sentiments can be better explained

plained by himself, in a letter to Sir Charles Guildford, with whom he occasionally corresponded, I will lay the said letter before my readers.

Melwill-Hall, August 5th.

GUILDFORD,

I Am in a devil of a hobble; I am in love, man, with the finest girl this day in Christendom! you can have no conception of her charms! but with all this beauty, she is very ignorant, which, were it not for my engagements to Miss Melwill, would hinder all thoughts of making her my wife;—but for a mistress, she is the most desirable creature on earth! For Cupid's sake, my dear Charles, give me

me your advice ! as I should wish for the affair to be so contrived, that the Melvills may not get a hint of it ; not that I am sure of the girl yet, but as I don't think (excuse my vanity) she has the least aversion to me—where, indeed, is the woman that has ? eh Charles ! I think her an easy prey ; indeed she makes great advances, which I know gives the gentle Emma pain ; so that between the two, I scarce know what to do. Pray, Charles, that's a good boy, help me out by an immediate answer ; but harkee—none of your musty advice, as I have enough of that here. She is on a visit at the Framfields, who have my house. She is a merchant's daughter in the north, who having no fortune to give her, has
sent

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sent her here to make it. Adieu,
it is near dinnertime, and my
charming Mary dines here.

Yours, &c. &c.

GEORGE WOODFORD.

To this letter George received
no answer, which surpris'd him
very much. He every day made
himself more agreeable to Miss
Bevill, and he every day planted
a fresh thorn in the innocent heart
of Emma. He would some-
times try to restrain himself before
her, but it was not in his power,
neither would Mary let him. She
had been in hopes that Emma
would have unbosomed herself to
her, but in this she was mistaken;
she therefore set her wits to work
to think of some scheme to separate
them,

them, for she made no doubt but that Woodford loved her, though he never talked of marriage, which she thought was on account of Miss Melvill, for she had not the least suspicion he had a design on her honour. At length she fixed on a scheme, which my readers will be acquainted with in due time. Mr. and Mrs. Melvill, in the meanwhile, were shocked at the behaviour of their young friend ; nay, they began to wish that their Emma might be weaned of her affection for him, as they trembled for her peace of mind if she ever was united to him. Young Melvill had not been at the Hall all the summer, therefore our hero had none but those about him who would rather have died than injured him.

A fort.

A fortnight passed after his having wrote to Sir Charles, in which time he had made very little progress, as Miss Bevill had assumed of late a serious and distant air. He often caught her alone bathed in tears, and when he begged for an explanation, she has left him abruptly. 'Tis true, had he talked of love, she would have listened to him with pleasure ; but this he did not, at a time when she might expect it. The truth was, he dared not mention his own terms ; and as marriage with her was farther from his thoughts than ever, he at present held his tongue. As Mary's dejection increased, Emma's spirits grew better ; this may appear odd to my readers, but the amiable girl, by the present appearances of things, really

really thought they had conceived a real affection for each other, and imputed the seriousness of Miss Bevill to the pain she felt at having estranged the heart of George from her, as she made no doubt of his having told her of his engagement to herself. Shall I, said she, make two young people miserable to gratify myself? Forbid it, heaven! Must Woodford, because I chose to fix my silly heart on him, give me his in return? 'Tis plain he never felt any more than a brotherly affection for me, as he behaves quite different to Miss Bevill; no, it was my foolish behaviour which made him try to love me. Bless me, what a bold hussy must I have been, to induce him to make such offers to my papa, for he certainly

has only been endeavouring to love me all this time, and if this young lady had not come in the way, we might have been united, and both miserable ! Oh, Emma, Emma, what have you escaped ! But I will instantly set about a reformation ; I will raise my spirits, regain my accustomed vivacity, and do all in my power to promote their happiness. Here she paused, and a tear started in her eye. And are all my future plans of happiness come to this ! and must I give up the only man on earth I ever can—— but let me not finish the sentence ! Perverse heart that you are, I will bend you to my purpose, and from this instant look on George Woodford only in the light of a friend, and if possible, forget I ever thought

on

on him as any other. She kept her resolution, and the whole week exerted a wit and vivacity George had never discovered in her before. She sought opportunities to leave him and Mary together, to the great surprise of every one. Her father and mother were much pleased, and determined to let her have her own way, without giving any interruption to her schemes. George felt himself confounded, as he began to fear he had almost lost her esteem, for the novelty of Mary's face was now worn off, and he scarce cared a rush for her more, as he perceived she aimed at being his wife, and determined, the first opportunity, to come to an explanation with Emma.

Mr. Melvill and Mr. Woodford having rode out, Emma took a walk to Mr. Framfield's; she enquired for Miss Bevill, and on being told she was in the garden, went in search of her. She found her in a melancholy posture, with a book in her hand, which she seemed to pay very little attention to. Miss Melvill began rallying her on her pensiveness of late, adding, do, my dear, make a confidant of me, and tell me the reason of your want of spirits.

Oh, Miss Melvill, I have long wished to unburden myself to you, but wanted the courage; but — She stopped. But what, my dear? cried Emma; you are at liberty to say

say any thing to me of Mr. Woodford.

Then you have discovered my partiality for Mr. Woodford?

Undoubtedly; you did not think to hide from your friends the great regard you have for each other.

For each other!—ay, Miss Emma, could I but be certain he had as much regard for me as I have for him!

Regard! why has he not declared his love to you?

No, never; I have often been led to think he had some little esteem for me, but love he has never

mentioned ; of late, when we are alone, he is very respectful, but silent and serious.

You amaze me, my dear, as I really thought every thing was settled, and we should soon hear of a wedding. At that moment, to the great relief of Emma, Mrs. Framfield entered the garden. Our heroine was astonished at what she had heard, as she found by what Mary said, that she knew not of his engagements to her. She directly concluded, that the reason of his not offering himself to Miss Bevill, proceeded from his fear of causing her pain. She revolved in her mind how she could let him know he was free ; she pitied them both, nor thought of herself, but
only

only wished to make them, as she thought, happy. These were her meditations as she was walking home.

On her entering the house, she was told Miss Haverford was there. At any other time she would have been glad to have seen her friend, but at present her head and heart were too full to feel the joy at meeting her which she otherwise would; but before the day was over, she determined to take the first opportunity of freeing George from his engagement to herself. In the meantime, when he came in from riding, he was presented with a letter from Sir Charles Guildford, which was as follows.

Larlingford-Abbey.

YOURS is but just come to hand, for by some means it has been mislaid, which on some accounts, I am very sorry for. In the name of God, George, are you mad! Could I ever have thought you would have been so wild a profligate, as to want to debauch a young inexperienced country girl, at a time too when you are engaged to so amiable a woman as Miss Melvill? I am shocked to think what by this time your foolish headstrong passions may have led you to; but no—it cannot be—you dare not be such a villain! Take care, Woodford, you don't entirely ruin yourself by your vanity

LADY EMMA MELVILL. 185

nity and perverse folly. Adieu, let me hear whether you are still entitled to my friendship, and if I may still subscribe myself,

Your sincere friend,

CHARLES GUILDFORD.

Our hero had no time to read this letter till after dinner, when he had so exhilarated his spirits with wine, that when he opened it, it only occasioned a loud laugh. He was in his own apartment, but being called to supper, he put it, as he thought, into his pocket, but dropt it at the door ; he went down in high spirits, and took his seat between Miss Bevill and Miss Melvill ; he was equal in his gallantries to both ladies, and diverted them,

as well as the whole table, very much ; but as the company was large, and the glass went about pretty freely, none of the gentlemen retired till they were far gone. The ladies made their exit a full hour before ; and as Emma must unavoidably pass the door of Woodford's apartment to go to her own, she saw a paper ; at first she was going on, but something prompted her to take it up, and on seeing it a letter, she hurried it into her pocket, as Miss Haverford and Miss Bevill, who were that night to sleep there, just then came to the bottom of the stairs ; the former young lady always slept with Emma, when she was at the Hall, so they both attended Miss Bevill to her

her chamber, but soon left her, as she complained of a head-ach.

While the two friends were undressing, Sabina said she had never seen Mr. Woodford so merry.

Nor I neither, my dear, answered Emma ; but I am afraid he and my papa will suffer to-morrow, if they drink much more.

I don't doubt but your papa will, my dear ; as for George, I dare say he is too used to it to suffer much.

Lord ! my dear, I hope drunkenness is not among his other failings.

Ah ! my dear Emma, these town sparks are sad creatures. Miss Haverford being by this time in bed,

bed, Miss Melvill thought of her letter, and sat down to read it, but had scarce got half through it, when she found herself grow sick and faint ; she had just power to pour out a glass of water and drink but Sabina, who had seen her motions through the bed-curtains, jumped out of bed to her assistance ; by her friendly aid she soon came to herself, and giving her the letter, desired her to read and give her opinion of it. Miss Haverford was as much shocked as her friend. For heaven's sake, my dear, how came you by this letter, and whom does it allude to ! I am rightly served, replied Emma, for my impertinent curiosity ; I picked it up at his chamber-door, where, I suppose he dropt it ; the one alluded to,

to, must be Miss Bevill. Poor, unhappy girl! you, as well as I, have fixed your affections on a worthless wretch! She then related to her friend every thing that had passed since Mary's coming to Herts. Sabina shook her head at Emma's recital; don't think, replied she, that I mean to excuse Woodford, far from it, but I think that Miss Bevill has a great deal of sly cunning; I will never believe that she is a stranger to your engagements with George, and if she had not given him encouragement, he never would have dared think of her in the manner this letter implies. Emma sighed. Do not, do not excuse him, my dear, I beg; he is a sad young man, and from this moment

moment I will give him up. O, my Sabina!—Here she burst into tears, and it was some time before her friend could soothe her. It was now broad day-light, and as neither were inclined to sleep, they put on their morning dresses, and determined to take a turn in the garden. As they walked they considered what was best to be done, and at length concluded that Emma should shew the letter to her mama, who should tell the whole affair to Mr. Melvill, and who at the same time that he gave George his dismissal, might give him some advice. But he certainly ought to marry Miss Bevill, said Emma. He certainly ought, if he has injured her, my dear; but that, you know, your papa will find out. But what an amiable

amiable man is this Sir Charles Guildford ! Yes, he is indeed.

—B Methinks if he were not engaged, he might supply Woodford's place,

Oh, my Sabina, jest not thus with my sorrows ! Long will it be, if ever, before this heart can esteem another ! yet, mistake me not, now I know him, how thoroughly base he is, I shall have very little trouble to conquer my affection for him. They just then thought they heard the sound of voices ; they stopped, and were silent, when they found it proceeded from an arbour in the next walk to them ; but there being a thick-set hedge between them, neither party could be seen, though the conversation
was

was distinctly heard by Emma and her friend. It was Miss Bevill and Woodford ; when the former said — talk not of generosity, Mr. Woodford ; you should not have tried to gain my affections, when you knew you were engaged to another.

Repeat not that cruel word, another, so often, answered George ; I never will be any other's than my lovely Mary's ; and could I but persuade you to fly with me, we might both be happy.

There can be no occasion to run away, I am sure ; if you really love me as you pretend, you need only speak to Miss Melvill, as the generosity you have just been talking of, will prevent her wishing to hinder
your

your real happiness. (Here some moments pause ensued on both sides.) I cannot, at last resumed George, give pain to so feeling a heart as Miss Melvill's; I think I may say she has honoured me with a great share of her esteem.

Then, sir, you do not love me.

I do, by heaven, prefer you to any woman on earth!

Then do you prefer Miss Emma's esteem to your own happiness?

My dear girl, do not talk in this romantic manner; elope with me to-morrow morning, and I will engage to satisfy all your scruples.

Will

Will you promise to carry me to my father's ?

Ay, my angel ! to your grandfather's if you will.

Hold, fir ; no liberties.

What the devil makes you such a prude, Mary ! But a few moments ago, you said you loved me ; now I dare not take a civil kiss.

Oh, Mr. Woodford ! (bursting into tears) how dare you treat me thus ! would you treat your Emma so !

If Emma had made the same appointment, Miss Beville, she would

would have scorned to have acted so like a prude.

Good heaven!—but I have brought it on myself; how could I expect any other in the condition you got up from table! Leave me, sir; I shall directly go home, and prepare for my journey to my father's, where I will, if possible, forget I ever knew a Woodford!

By my soul you shall not leave me in anger; let the wine plead an excuse for any freedom of speech I may have allowed myself; only promise to pass this day here, and meet me in this arbour to-night, at eleven, and every doubt or scruple you may have, shall be cleared up.

How

How can I trust myself with you, Mr. Woodford ?

By heaven you shall be safe ; we will only consider on some plan to ensure our future happiness. With this they parted, leaving Miss Haverford and Miss Melvill in the utmost astonishment. Well, said the former at last, what think you of Miss Bevill now, my dear ?

Think of her ; why, that she is running headlong to her ruin. But Woodford ! Oh heaven, what a dissembler !

Nay, my dear ; on my conscience I don't blame Woodford. When a young woman puts herself into the power of a man—a man too,

too, whom she owns she knows to be in liquor, at such a time in the morning, and in such a sequestered spot as this, what can she expect? and not only that, but consent to meet him again in the dead of night; why she could not have done worse, unless indeed she had admitted him to her chamber.

'Tis very true, my dear; but all this don't excuse him.

No, my dear, I know that; but pray what use do you intend to make of this pretty *tete-a-tete*?

Tell the whole to my mama, and leave her to act as she pleases.

Well,

Well, but you will go down to breakfast?

Yes, I will, and take a look at one whom I must never see more!

They now turned towards the house, and at nine entered the breakfast-parlour. They were the first there, but were soon joined by Miss Bevill and Mrs. Melvill. The tender father and mother directly saw their Emma's want of rest, which made them look on the other two, whom they found very little better.

Hey-day! ladies, said Mrs. Melvill, what's the matter? you don't seem to have rested well last night. I rested very well, madam, murmured

mured out Mary, but I have got the head-ach.

Indeed, madam, said Miss Haverford, neither your daughter nor I rested well; something disturbed us, and we got up early and took a walk.

Where? said Miss Bevill.

Where, my dear! in the garden, to be sure, where I saw you.

Me, Miss! Lord, I was not out of my chamber.

No! then I declare it was your ghost! for I either did or thought I saw you.

At

At this instant George entered; he paid his compliments, and took his seat; he looked at Emma, but found her eyes averted; she began to pour out the tea, but her hand shook so she could scarce hold the pot. The four young ones seemed equally confused, for George had missed his letter, and the averted eyes of Emma, added to the keen ones of Miss Haverford, alarmed him. After a sparing meal on all sides, Mrs. Melvill left the room, when Emma directly followed, and desired to speak with her in her dressing-room, where the dear girl, with tears, related the tale.

Mrs. Melvill was not less shocked at Woodford's villainy than at Miss Bevill's duplicity, and directly wished

wished to send for Mr. Melvill, but Emma stopped her.

Stay, my dear mama, cried she; I know the excessive tenderness of you and my dear papa will lead you to think, it will cost me too much pain to part with Woodford; but, be assured, I have seen him this morning for the last time, and I shall always thank heaven, that I have had so miraculous an escape; at the same time I must beg that no other match may be as yet thought of, as I should rather spend a few more years with you and my dear father. Mrs. Melvill folded her in her arms, and mingled her tears with her beloved daughter's, and this was their situation when Mr. Melvill came in. He desired

an explanation, which was given him by his lady, together with Emma's resolution and desire; the former he commended her much for, and the latter he most kindly assured her, should be left to herself. He then, after a paternal embrace, left her to the care of her mama, and going into his study, where he took Sir Charles's letter, sent for Woodford. Our hero received this message with some little agitation, but went directly.

Be seated, Mr. Woodford, said Mr. Melvill at his entrance. The affair I have sent to you upon is rather a disagreeable one; you have lost a letter, I believe, sir?

Here

Here George started. I have so, sir; but God forbid it should have fallen into your hands.

No, it did not; but it fell into my daughter's, which is all the same. Pray who is the girl Sir Charles speaks of?

Indeed, sir, it is nothing but a mere frolick; I wrote but in jest, but my friend took it seriously.

It was but a jest; but whom was this jest made on?

O, sir, only a farmer's daughter who lives near here; but indeed nothing has passed since, and I again assure you, it was a mere jest.

Then, I suppose, it was but a *jest*, your meeting Miss Bevill in the garden this morning; and it was but a *jest*, your wanting her to elope with you.

For heaven's sake, sir, how came you to the knowledge of all this!

To put you out of your pain, sir, my daughter picked up this letter at your chamber-door last night; and this morning, Miss Haverford and she heard the whole of your discourse in the garden, with the poor infatuated Miss Bevill.

Oh, for heaven's sake, sir, plead for me with the amiable Miss Melvill, and forgive me yourself.

No,

No, sir ; my Emma's determination is fixed, and she will never see you more. O, Woodford ! could I have thought the son of my old and worthy friend would ever have so far forgot the laws of hospitality, as to attempt deluding a poor weak girl, and at the very same time too, that he pretended to pay his addresses to the daughter of the man whose guest he was. I do not excuse Miss Bevill, as I really think she made advances, not proper for a modest young woman ; but still your engagements with Emma, if you had really felt what you pretended for her, would have deterred you from taking notice of a bold, forward hussy. But your conduct, young man, this last winter, in town, has often given

both Mrs. Melvill and me the most exquisite pain ; yet were we willing to think every day would shew you your error, whereas every day has added some fresh one to the list. There is scarce any excuse for you ; your parents were both amiable worthy people : they adored you, and strove to make you an amiable member of society ; but how ill have you behaved, and requited their pains. I don't find your intimates are of a loose disposition ; Sir Charles Guildford always appeared a worthy young man, and this letter is a convincing proof of the goodness of his heart. Sir James Sedley likewise is, to appearance, as sober as Sir Charles. Where then do you learn those vicious habits ? Is it possible your own heart
can

can thus teach you to ruin others !
O fie, George ! I am sorry for
you, and sorry am I to say, your
presence in this house is no longer
desired.

I don't pretend to extenuate my
faults, sir ; but let me implore Miss
Melvill's forgiveness before I go.

I am certain it is in vain, as she
assured me she could not see you.

I cannot go without seeing her ;
indeed my heart has never ceased to
adore her, whatever follies I may
have been guilty of.

Oh, Woodford, Woodford, say
not so ! but be that as it will, you
must now forget her, as she has

K⁴

solemnly

solemnly assured us, she never will be yours ; you had better go home, look into your affairs, pay off your debts, discharge your servants, dispose of your house, horses, and carriages, and retire to some sequestered spot, till you have retrieved your estate ; lead a regular and sober life, and fortune once more may find you out ; lay aside your vanity and conceitedness, and don't for the future think no woman can resist you ; do this, and we may all of us receive you as a friend, though we never can consider you in any nearer light. Adieu ; do not seek to see either Mrs. Melvill or Emma, as it will be to no purpose ; but if you are inclined to marry either Miss Bevil or any other woman, you are free

free from all engagements here, as you can never, after what has past, be my daughter's husband.

Do not leave me thus, sir, cried George, springing forward, and catching hold of the arm of Mr. Melvill; thus on my knees do I solemnly swear never to be another's! No; this heart and hand, however unworthy, shall still be at the disposal of my Emma!

Leave me, cried Mr. Melvill, who was greatly affected; leave me, and let your future conduct convince me of your contrition.

He then quitted the room, and left our hero almost petrified with grief. At length he had presence

of mind to order his chaise, and throwing himself into it, set off for Bruton-street, with an uneasiness of mind he had scarce ever before experienced.

We will now leave at present the penitent George, and again return to Melvill-hall. Miss Bevill felt herself alarmed at what Miss Haverford had said, and by her countenance, she feared she had seen her with Mr. Woodford. Miss Melvill's looks likewise confirmed her suspicions, and on Mrs. Melvill leaving the room, and her daughter following, she could scarce keep her seat. She wished for an opportunity to speak to Mr. Woodford, but, though Mr. Melvill soon followed his wife and daughter,
Miss

Miss Haverford remained, nor did either of the three speak or move till Mr. Melvill sent for our hero. Miss Bevill took up a news-paper, but her eyes were the whole time seemingly fixed on one paragraph. George stood with his arms folded at the window, with his fixed on the trees. Miss Haverford had her work, which she paid great attention to, except now and then stealing a look at the two criminals. The two ladies continued as before on George's departure for some minutes, when Mary started up, and said, I think I will take a walk home; do, Miss Haverford, be so obliging to make my excuses to the ladies.

I thought

I thought you were to have staid here all day, Miss Bevill.

No, indeed I promised no such thing.

No ! then my ears strangely deceived me, replied Sabina, with a most penetrating look.

I don't understand you, madam, answered Mary, colouring and putting on her cloak, so wish you a good morning.

As she was crossing the hall, she was met by Mrs. Melvill. If you are going, Miss Bevill, I should be glad to speak to you first. Mary was forced to comply, and followed the old lady into her dressing-room
in

in silence. When they were seated, Mrs. Melvill said, my dear Miss Beville, what could induce you to meet Mr. Woodford at so early an hour this morning alone in the garden?

Lord, madam, if I met Mr. Woodford I was not to run away from him sure!

Meeting him by appointment and meeting him accidentally, are two things; but you not only met him this morning, but likewise were rash enough, to use no harsher phrase, to promise him another private meeting this evening.

Miss Haverford, madam, must have been mistaken.

Miss

Miss Haverford's ears are not apt to deceive her ; but if hers did, my daughter's did not.

Your daughter's, madam ! answered she, in great confusion.

Yes, Miss, my daughter's. Oh, Miss Bevill ! this equivocation is not right in you. You are inexperienced in the world, and I hope, unacquainted with its baseness. A young woman cannot be too careful how she allows a man liberties. Our sex, sorry am I to say it, at least a great part of them, let themselves down so much at present, that the men think they are licenced to do just what they please. Their whole study is to entrap the unwary, and render them subservient to

to their pleasure for a time, then cast them off, when they must either starve for want, as none of their former friends will look on them, or throw themselves into the first libertine's arms they meet, who may perhaps use them worse than the first. Excuse, my dear girl, the liberty I take ; but I must own I am very much alarmed, to see so young a lady so very forward. I don't find that Mr. Woodford offered you marriage ; besides his estate is too small to support you and himself, in the style I am sure you would both choose to live in. He is a young man whom we have known from the hour of his birth ; his parents were the worthiest people breathing, but they were unfortunately taken from him at an early

early period. We hoped the bad habits he had contracted, proceeded more from fashion than real vice ; but as he could dare, under our roof, to entice a young lady away, and render her miserable for life, which we find was his intention, from a letter he dropt, it is high time to discard him. Mr. Melvill has undertaken the task, though I know it is a difficult one, as we all regarded him much, and once hoped he would have been worthy our alliance ; but that is now entirely at an end, and it is doubtful if he ever enters these gates again.

Mrs. Melvill now rose, as did Mary, who had scarce lifted up her eyes from the first of Mrs. Melvill's harangue, and dropping a low courtesey,

teſey, left the houſe, not in the moſt agreeable humour in the world, which was not at all mended on her return home, where ſhe found a ſervant to conduct her to the north, as her father was taken very ill.

Mrs. Melvill returned to her daughter, with whom ſhe found Miſs Haverford, who was offering every conſolation in her power. They were ſoon after joined by Mr. Melvill, who gave ſuch an account of George's contrition, as drew tears of joy from each of the ladies. Poor Emma tried to keep up her ſpirits, and ſucceeded pretty well, though they all miſſed him at their meals, as he was generally the life of the table. Sabina ſtrove
all

all in her power to comfort her friend, nor were her endeavours ineffectual.

About a week after, Mr. Henry Melvill came home, and was not a little pleased to hear the account from his father of George's misconduct. In this situation we will leave them, and once more return to our hero.

The first thing he did on his arrival in Bruton-street, was to write to Sir Charles Guildford. He told him the whole story, and upbraided him not a little for sending him so severe a letter. At the same time that he execrated his own carelessness and stupidity, he assured him, that Miss Bevill was the first who spoke

spoke of meeting him in the garden, for which purpose she contrived to stay that night at the Hall. He likewise added ; had I met her that night, which would certainly have been the case, if the letter had not been found, I should, in all probability, have run away with her ; the consequence then would have been as bad, though I greatly fear it could not have been much worse.

This letter being finished, he dressed and went out, but found very few of his acquaintance in town ; his intimates were all gone, and London, for the first time, appeared a desert. He returned home early, but passed a restless night, his mind was disturbed, and he arose fretful and uneasy in the morning ; he had not been long at
the

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the breakfast-table, when he was presented with a number of bills, at the bottom of each was a large sum annexed, which he was just then totally unable to pay. He sighed, rolled them up, and put them into his bureau.

End of the First Volume.

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